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# 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Institutional Dialogue Event

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Summary Report  
Dialogue4Nature

*A project labelled by the UfM*



Union for the Mediterranean  
Union pour la Méditerranée  
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



## Programme priority: MED Governance

### Specific objective: 3.1: Other actions to support a better cooperation governance

**Project mission: Protecting, restoring and valorising the natural environment and heritage**

**Website:** <https://natural-heritage.interreg-euro-med.eu/>

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<b>Version of the document</b>	2

## Introduction

The Interreg Euro-MED Mission for Natural Heritage aims to promote the idea of protecting, restoring and enhancing Mediterranean natural heritage



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in a coherent way. The annual institutional dialogue events are the main tool for improving governance through transferring best practices to other stakeholders and territories.

The **2nd Annual Institutional Dialogue** of the Natural Heritage Mission was held on the 28th and 29th of November 2024, hosted at the Oceanographic Centre of Málaga. Coordinated by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, the event brought together over 150 participants from 17 Mediterranean countries. The dialogue provided a platform for key stakeholders, including representatives from scientific institutions, governments, NGOs, and civil society, to discuss actionable solutions for protecting and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean region. This year's dialogue emphasised governance, restoration policies, and the role of cross-border collaboration in addressing the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.



## Highlights from Day 1: Marine and Coastal Restoration Policy

### Institutional Opening



The day began with opening remarks from key leaders, including:

- **Maher Mahjoub**, Director of IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, who stressed the need for cross-border collaboration.
- **Christoph Maier**, Project Officer at the Interreg Euro-MED Joint Secretariat, highlighting the Mediterranean's role as a biodiversity hotspot.
- **Alessandra Sensi**, Head of Sector Environment, Green and Blue Economy at the Union for the Mediterranean, discussed the importance of integrating regional efforts with global frameworks.
- **Javier Gutiérrez del Álamo Cabello**, Director General of Environment and Sustainability at Málaga City Council, showcasing local restoration initiatives.

### High-Level Panel: Marine and Coastal Restoration Policy Context



Moderated by **Alberto Arroyo Schnell** of IUCN, this panel explored the EU's new regulation, the Nature Restoration Law (NRL), and its alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework, focusing on its implications for the Mediterranean. Key discussions included:

- **Vedran Nikolić** (European Commission): Presented the groundbreaking NRR, which mandates the restoration of 20% of EU land and sea by 2030 and extends to all degraded ecosystems by 2050. Nikolić highlighted the regulation's emphasis on quality, connectivity, and active and passive restoration, underscoring the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders and aligning efforts with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the Habitats Directive.
- **José Luis García Varas** (WWF Spain): Emphasised the necessity of restoring habitats and the ecosystem services they provide. He advocated for passive restoration as a cost-effective approach to address the root causes of degradation while promoting long-term sustainability. García Varas also called for clear objectives, effective monitoring, and science-based strategies to ensure impactful restoration.





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## Key Themes and Takeaways:

- **Beyond Protection to Restoration:** Recognising restoration as the next frontier in addressing biodiversity loss, with the Mediterranean region poised to lead transboundary initiatives.
- **Policy Integration:** Integrating restoration efforts into existing EU frameworks such as the Habitats Directive, CFP, and Maritime Spatial Planning to streamline priorities and promote synergistic actions.
- **Passive Restoration and Root Causes:** Stressing passive restoration's cost-effectiveness, with a focus on addressing the root causes of degradation through governance reforms and stakeholder collaboration.
- **Regional and Transboundary Collaboration:** Highlighting the Mediterranean's interconnected ecosystems, requiring coordinated action through platforms like the Barcelona Convention and the Union for the Mediterranean.
- **Funding and Greenwashing:** Increasing restoration funding while safeguarding transparency and avoiding greenwashing in private sector engagements.
- **Global Impact:** The NRR serves as a model for global restoration efforts under the Global Biodiversity Framework, with the EU using its influence to promote restoration beyond its borders.
- **Science-Based Approaches:** Developing and scaling evidence-driven restoration techniques while implementing long-term monitoring systems to ensure effectiveness and adaptability.
- **Vision for 2030 and Beyond:** Achieving the 30% conservation target for oceans and restoring key habitats, with a focus on resilience to climate change and securing ecosystem services for coastal communities.



## Roundtable: Adopting the Restoration Agenda in the Mediterranean



Moderated by  
**Peter Mackelworth**  
(Marine Institute, Croatia), this roundtable explored strategies for advancing marine and coastal restoration in the

Mediterranean, emphasising trust-building, collaboration, and actionable frameworks. The discussion featured contributions from regional experts:

- **Atef Ouerghi** (SPA/RAC): Highlighted the Barcelona Convention’s pivotal role in conservation, particularly through its Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol (SPA/BD). Ouerghi emphasised the role of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs). He recalled the importance of using these tools to expand Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and increase protection levels, aligning efforts with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- **Fernando Magdaleno Mas** (Spain’s Ministry for Ecological Transition): Shared Spain’s journey in expanding MPAs from 1% to 21% over 15 years, with a target of 30% by 2030. He underscored the importance of knowledge, participation, and communication in fostering trust among stakeholders, particularly through participatory processes with fishermen and local communities. He also emphasised the need for transboundary collaboration, both between countries and across land-sea-ecosystems, to address challenges such as sediment release and ecological anchoring.
- **Arina Maraš** (Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, and Northern Region Development of Montenegro): Discussed Montenegro’s progress as an EU accession country in mapping



potential Natura 2000 sites, with a focus on marine and terrestrial ecosystems. She highlighted the critical role of restoration in achieving the 30x30 conservation target and emphasised the importance of communication and education in engaging local communities.

- **Dimitra Dafnomili** (Region of Crete): Presented case studies on Posidonia meadow restoration, showcasing successful pilot projects while acknowledging challenges in community acceptance. She stressed the need for early and inclusive participation processes to build understanding and support for ecosystem services.
- **Stefania Manca** (Genoa City Council): Emphasised the need for circularity and communication in restoration efforts, calling for better alignment between local and global governance frameworks. She showcased Genoa's integration of restoration into urban planning, including projects transforming post-industrial areas into biodiverse, adaptive public spaces. She called for a more inclusive process in which local authorities would have competencies over the restoration agenda.

### Key Messages and Takeaways:

- **Trust and Participation:** Trust-building, underpinned by inclusive and transparent participatory processes, is essential for successful restoration efforts. Experts highlighted the importance of specialised support for the psychological and emotional aspects of engagement.
- **Transboundary Collaboration:** Restoration in the Mediterranean requires integrated efforts across countries, ecosystems, and governance levels. Participants called for enhanced cooperation under frameworks like the Barcelona Convention.
- **Policy Integration:** Restoration efforts should align with EU and global frameworks while addressing local contexts. The integration of restoration goals into urban planning and national strategies was highlighted as a best practice.
- **Active and Passive Restoration:** While passive restoration addresses root causes cost-effectively, active measures like ecological anchoring and large-scale planting remain crucial for regions under significant pressure. Maritime and terrestrial spatial planning should play a key role in this direction.





- **Monitoring and Long-Term Vision:** Science-based approaches, long-term monitoring, and adaptive management were emphasised as vital to ensuring restoration success.
- **Education and Communication:** Communication strategies must complement education initiatives to foster a culture of restoration. Examples included multi-level trainings on climate adaptation and school programs bringing children to protected areas.
- **Local Challenges in a Global Context:** Cities like Genoa exemplify how local actions can align with global goals. However, they also face unique challenges, such as navigating overlapping regulations and translating global policies into actionable local strategies. Bottom-up approaches in which local authorities would play a central role in the restoration agenda within their administrative boundaries were argued.

### Roundtable: From Policy to Action



Moderated by **Constantin Tsakas** (Plan Bleu), this session delved into the practicalities of translating restoration policies into action, addressing challenges such as funding, stakeholder engagement and data harmonisation. The roundtable brought together diverse voices to share experiences and propose solutions for advancing marine and coastal restoration in the Mediterranean. Key insights and contributions included:



- **Arnaud Terrisse** (Plan Bleu): Highlighted the contribution of [ARTEMIS Project](#), which integrates ecosystem service valuation and develops natural capital accounting tools for biodiversity and blue carbon. The project is demonstrating success in four pilot sites, addressing challenges for seagrass meadows restoration such as governance hurdles. Particular emphasis was placed on political and regulatory aspects, especially regarding Posidonia seagrass meadows, for which legislation already exists but remains insufficiently enforced. Strengthening the implementation of these legal frameworks is essential to ensure the success of restoration efforts. Thus, Terrisse emphasised the need for standardised monitoring systems and enforcement of existing legislation, building on the non-deterioration principle, to prevent further ecosystem degradation and ensure long-term restoration success.
- **David Álvarez García** (ECOACSA): Discussed financial mechanisms to bridge the gap in restoration funding, such as Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) and biodiversity credits. He emphasised that these market-based instruments must align with local contexts and regulatory frameworks to ensure feasibility and scalability. Álvarez highlighted the importance of connecting biodiversity restoration to economic benefits, advocating for harmonised business models to attract investments.
- **Teresa Pastor** (Europarc): Presented the [MPA4Change Project](#)'s initiative, which integrates climate adaptation strategies into MPA management plans. The initiative builds on past projects (MPAAdapt and MPAEngage) and includes harmonised monitoring protocols, citizen science, and participatory approaches. Pastor announced the launch of the "100 MPA Med Alliance", a network aiming to implement adaptation strategies across at least 100 MPAs, fostering collaboration between northern and southern Mediterranean shores.
- **Popi Pagkou** (HCMR): Addressed the complexities of harmonising marine biodiversity monitoring across Mediterranean countries through the example of the [ABIOMMED project](#). She emphasised the importance of engaging a broad stakeholder network and adopting tailored assessment tools that align with regional contexts while ensuring interoperability between data systems. Specifically, she stressed one of ABIOMMED's key aspects which lies in its participatory and collaborative approach. The relevant stakeholders—countries, regional institutions, and other actors—were fully integrated into the



project. They actively participated in the different phases and contributed, through a co-construction process, to ensuring the relevance and applicability of the results.

- **Flavia Cavaliere** (OCEANOGAMI): Advocated for the development of harmonised indicators to streamline data collection and inform actionable policies. She stressed that data-driven approaches are critical for tackling ecological degradation, citing the urgency to reverse losses such as the ones observed for seagrass meadows (34% over the past 40 years).
- **Orens Pasqueron de Fommervault** (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission - UNESCO): Shared insights on the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), which provides reliable, free and interoperable data to guide decision-making and policy development. Essential Ocean Variables from GOOS, in addition to providing a solid scientific foundation, can be used as key indicators to assess the effectiveness of conservation and restoration measures. However, the success of these initiatives depends on strengthened transnational collaboration. Pasqueron de Fommervault thus highlighted the importance of international cooperation in overcoming political and legal barriers to data sharing.
- **Xavier Bernard-Sans** (Pyrenees Mediterranean Euroregion): Emphasised the importance of pilot projects to address local challenges, such as invasive species, water pollution, and habitat degradation. He advocated for cross-border restoration initiatives and aligning regional strategies with local needs through programs like POCTEFA.
- **Christoph Maier** (Interreg Euro-MED Joint Secretariat): Stressed the importance of aligning projects with EU policy frameworks to ensure their relevance and impact. Maier discussed the role of collaborative platforms in transferring knowledge and scaling successful restoration initiatives.

### **Key Messages and Takeaways:**

- **Science-Based Solutions:** Restoration must be guided by robust scientific methodologies, with long-term monitoring systems to evaluate progress and adaptively manage outcomes.
- **Financial Innovation:** Innovative funding mechanisms like biodiversity credits and PES can address resource gaps, but they must



be tailored to local contexts and supported by clear regulatory frameworks.

- **Data Harmonisation:** Developing interoperable data systems and harmonised indicators is essential to inform policies and facilitate collaboration across regions.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Effective restoration requires the involvement of all stakeholders, including local communities, governments, NGOs, and the private sector, to foster co-responsibility and ensure sustainability.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Transboundary collaboration is critical in the Mediterranean, given the interconnected nature of its ecosystems. Platforms like the Barcelona Convention and the Union for the Mediterranean play key roles in fostering regional synergy.
- **Pilot Projects as Foundations:** Small-scale pilot projects provide valuable insights and scalable solutions to address restoration challenges, offering a pathway to broader implementation.
- **Aligning Policies with Action:** Restoration efforts must integrate with existing EU frameworks, such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

## Conclusions

The event concluded with reflections on the importance of translating policy principles into actionable goals and fostering collaboration across all Mediterranean regions. Insights were shared by key stakeholders to refine and advance the Mission's objectives:

- **Alessandra Sensi** (Union for the Mediterranean): Highlighted the need to expand the policy focus beyond the EU to include northern and eastern Mediterranean regions. She emphasised that the policy recommendations being developed under the Natural Heritage Mission, while grounded in principles, should incorporate concrete targets and operational pillars to guide actions in the next 2–3 years. This would help align restoration projects with clear and achievable objectives.
- **Carolina Pérez** (MedCities): Discussed gaps identified in the day's discussions, underscoring the importance of connecting governance



levels to ensure cohesive restoration strategies. She reiterated the hierarchy of action: prioritising non-deterioration, followed by passive restoration, and finally active restoration. This structured approach would maximise restoration outcomes while leveraging existing policy frameworks.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Operationalising Restoration Goals:** The Natural Heritage Mission policy recommendations on restoration should move beyond principles to identify key action areas, fostering alignment among projects and stakeholders.
- **Governance Integration:** Emphasising connections between local, national, and regional governance to create synergies and ensure effective implementation.
- **Strategic Priorities:** Establishing restoration priorities that align with the principles of non-degradation, passive restoration, and active restoration, while integrating transboundary and ecosystem-based approaches.

### Afternoon Session: Marine and Coastal Restoration in Spain



Moderated by **Pilar Marín** (IUCN Med), the afternoon session focused on Spain's leadership in marine and coastal restoration, with key highlights including:





**The Expansion of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):** Spain has increased its MPAs from 1% to 15% in the last 15 years, aiming to achieve 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. This aligns with broader EU goals and reflects Spain's commitment to biodiversity conservation.

**The National Restoration Plan:** MITECO is developing a comprehensive National Restoration Plan, with a draft expected by September 2026. This plan will integrate restoration priorities across various ecosystems.

**Key Restoration Pillars:** Fernando Magdaleno highlighted three pillars essential for restoration success:

- Enhancing knowledge using scientific insights.
- Fostering participatory processes with stakeholders.
- Strengthening communication to build societal trust.

**Innovative Tools:** The launch of the Spanish Inventory of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity (IEPNB) geovisor was announced. This tool will visualise significant restoration projects and enhance public engagement.



The following flagship restoration projects were discussed:

- **REST-COAST Project:** Large-scale restoration of coastal ecosystems, including wetlands and marshes in the Ebro Delta, funded by Horizon 2020.



- **Posidonia Restoration:** Efforts to restore seagrass meadows using nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change impacts.
- **Pan-Med PINNA:** Conservation and passive restoration efforts for the endangered Pinna Nobilis species in Mediterranean refuge zones.
- **MEDCORAL:** Restoration of coral habitats in the Alboran Sea, focusing on mitigating the impacts of invasive algae and enhancing coral connectivity.
- **Life Ecorest:** Collaboration with fishers to restore benthic ecosystems through innovative trawling impact reduction techniques.
- **RESALAR:** Micro-restoration of abandoned salt flats and adjacent sandy ecosystems, showcasing nature-based remediation and community involvement.
- **FoResTA:** Recovery of Cystoseira forests in Mediterranean coastal areas, addressing biodiversity and ecosystem functionality.
- **DEEP CORE:** Restoration of deep-sea habitats degraded by human activities, employing innovative techniques to rebuild biodiversity.
- **REDRESS:** A project focused on sustainable agriculture techniques to mitigate erosion and promote land-sea ecological connectivity.

### Key takeaways from the session:

- **Collaboration and Consensus:** Effective restoration requires a networked approach involving public and private entities, alongside long-term scientific monitoring.
- **Governance Challenges:** Overcoming administrative and financial barriers is crucial for scaling successful restoration projects.
- **Significant Benefits:** Restoration projects improve ecosystem functionality and resilience, enhance ecosystem services, and contribute to local economic recovery.
- **Scientific and Technical Knowledge:** Restoration success depends on advanced scientific understanding and technical innovation, especially in complex environments like deep-sea habitats.

### Parallel Activity: The Climate Journey

For non-Spanish speaking peers, a parallel activity, "**The Climate Journey**," was organised by Social Climate. This guided walking tour explored Málaga's historical, cultural, and economic connections to the sea, focusing



on climate change impacts and solutions related to marine ecosystems. Key stops included:

- Malaga Oceanographic Center: Introduction to the centre's research and the city's coastal evolution.
- Río Guadalmedina: Insights into Málaga's historical growth and urban ecology.
- Málaga Cathedral and Paseo del Parque: Discussion on biodiversity, ecosystem services, and conservation strategies for climate adaptation.
- Pompidou Museum: Examination of tourism's bidirectional relationship with climate change and upcoming coastline projects employing nature-based solutions.



The activity provided an engaging way for participants to connect with Málaga's marine heritage while discussing sustainability challenges and success stories.



# Highlights from Day 2: Building the Community of Practice

## Keynote Speech



**Mario Giampietro** (European Centre for Governance in Complexity) delivered a thought-provoking keynote speech titled "Improving the Quality of Science for Governance." His presentation explored three main themes:

### 1. **The Challenge of Complexity in Governance:**

- He argued that conventional scientific models often fail to address the intricacies of complex systems. Using the metaphor of different "narratives," he highlighted how scientific advice depends on the storyteller's chosen scale and perspective.
- Giampietro critiqued reductionist approaches and called for embracing multi-scale, interdisciplinary methods to tackle sustainability challenges effectively.

### 2. **Post-Normal Science:**

- Giampietro introduced the concept of post-normal science, which addresses situations where facts are uncertain, stakes are high, and decisions are urgent. He stressed the importance of



integrating diverse narratives to guide policymaking under uncertainty.

- He outlined the pitfalls of "epistemic boxing," where scientific evidence is constrained within narrow, pre-analytical framings, leading to biased or incomplete solutions.

### 3. **Quantitative Storytelling as a Tool for Governance:**

- He proposed "quantitative storytelling" as an alternative to traditional data-driven approaches. This methodology emphasises transparency, inclusivity, and adaptability in the co-production of knowledge, ensuring that policy narratives remain robust and equitable.
- Giampietro urged policymakers and scientists to navigate the tension between "toxic truths" and "noble lies" in sustainability discourses, advocating for courage and common sense in addressing inconvenient knowledge.

During the Q&A session, participants engaged with Giampietro in applying his concepts to real-world challenges:

- **Applying Quantitative Storytelling Locally** with diverse stakeholders and iteratively refining them to reflect changing circumstances.
- **Integrating Stakeholder Narratives** and managing conflicting stakeholder interests, by balancing technical insights and societal values.
- **Addressing Decision Paralysis** by adopting incremental strategies and focusing on adaptability rather than pursuing overly deterministic solutions.

The keynote underscored the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, humility, and reflexivity in scientific advice to support sustainable governance in the face of escalating global challenges.





## Working Groups Meeting



Participants worked to finalise the Policy

Recommendations on Restoration in which the Natural Heritage Mission community had been working on over the previous months. After reviewing the draft recommendations, the different Working Groups divided into rooms to advance the discussions, which focused on:

- **Aligning the Recommendations with the Euro-Mediterranean Context:** The working groups reviewed the document's objectives to ensure they addressed the unique socio-political realities of the Mediterranean region. Participants stressed the importance of incorporating principles from frameworks like the Barcelona Convention and the EU Nature Restoration Regulation in order to extend the geographical scope to the whole Mediterranean Basin.
- **Refining Recommendations and Identifying Gaps:** Groups identified critical areas needing improvement, such as more specific action plans for integrating restoration into urban and regional policies. Key gaps included insufficient emphasis on marine governance and transboundary collaboration.
- **Developing Actionable Outcomes:** Participants proposed establishing clear priorities for restoration efforts, and a clear roadmap on how to position them in the Mediterranean arena.



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## Afternoon Session: Building the Natural Heritage Community of Practice, Networking and Synergies

### Geo-Clustering Exercise





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The Geo-Clustering Exercise aimed to introduce participants to the concept of **clustering and networking within the Community of Practice** while fostering collaboration among stakeholders working in the same geographical areas. This interactive session encouraged participants to reflect on their roles, ongoing projects, and future collaboration opportunities.

The session began with a plenary introduction, during which participants were familiarised with clustering and networking tools developed by the Mission for Natural Heritage. Short presentations outlined the utility of Community members' mapping, the CRM tool, and strategies for enhancing connectivity among stakeholders. Following this, participants were organised into **five geo-clusters: 'South Mediterranean and International Organisations', 'Iberian Peninsula', 'Italy, France and Malta', 'Balkans', and 'Greece and Cyprus'**.

In each group, participants were encouraged to introduce themselves using a structured format, detailing their roles, the target groups they address, and the projects they are currently involved in. The exercise included guided discussions to identify shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration. Participants contributed to a summary document to capture insights for future reference, which will serve as a basis for continued communication within the clusters' mailing lists. These are the summary results per cluster: [Balkan](#), [Greece-Cyprus](#), [Iberia](#), [Italy-France-Malta](#) and [South Med and International](#).







## Thematic Projects Marketplace



The Thematic Projects Marketplace provided a dynamic environment for participants to **explore the 13 thematic projects within the Mission's** network. This session encouraged networking, the exchange of ideas, and the identification of collaboration opportunities among project representatives and attendees.

Participants engaged in a rotating system where each stand represented a thematic project. Attendees were encouraged to **visit each stand, interact with project representatives, and document potential synergies and ideas** using handouts. A structured format ensured that projects not only showcased their achievements but also collected feedback and suggestions from visitors. These are the results of the marketplace exercise divided per Thematic Project: Artemis, Carbon 4 Soil Quality, COASTRUST, FRED, Germ of Life, GreenList4MMPAs, LocAll4Flood, MedSeaRise, MPA4Change, StategyMedFor, TREASURE, WE GO COOP, Wetland4Change.

The session also featured a **dedicated timeline stand** where participants contributed key events and activities for 2025. This timeline highlighted public project events, external opportunities, and Mission-specific activities,







- Restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems is critical to addressing biodiversity loss and climate change impacts.
- The EU Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) and the Global Biodiversity Framework are pivotal guiding frameworks.

### **Policy Integration and Alignment:**

- Restoration efforts must integrate with broader EU policies like the Habitats Directive, Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and Maritime Spatial Planning.
- Local and regional strategies, such as urban planning and national frameworks, should reflect global conservation targets.

### **Transboundary Collaboration:**

- The Mediterranean's interconnected ecosystems demand coordinated action across countries and governance levels.
- Platforms such as the Barcelona Convention and the Union for the Mediterranean are vital for fostering synergy.

### **Science-Based and Adaptive Approaches:**

- Evidence-driven techniques, long-term monitoring, and adaptive management are crucial for effective restoration.
- Innovative projects like ARTEMIS and Global Ocean Observing Systems guide decision-making with robust data systems.

### **Community Engagement and Trust Building:**

- Inclusive participation, involving stakeholders like local communities and fishermen, builds trust and enhances project sustainability.
- Communication and education are essential for fostering societal buy-in and understanding the value of restoration.

### **Innovative Financial Mechanisms:**

- Tools like Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), biodiversity credits, and Nature-based Solutions address funding gaps.
- These mechanisms should align with local and regional contexts for scalability and impact.



### **Pilot Projects as Scalable Solutions:**

- Small-scale restoration initiatives (e.g. Posidonia meadows, deep-sea habitats, etc.) provide insights into addressing challenges and opportunities for larger-scale implementation.

### **Operationalizing Clear Restoration Goals:**

- Restoration projects should prioritise non-degradation first, followed by passive and active restoration.
- Establishing actionable, measurable targets aligned with Mediterranean-specific socio-political realities is critical.

### **Addressing Governance Challenges:**

- Bridging gaps between local, national, and international governance levels ensures cohesive and efficient restoration strategies.
- Administrative barriers and overlapping regulations need to be streamlined for effective policy execution.

### **Leveraging Events and Networking:**

- Interactive sessions like the Thematic Projects Marketplace and Geo-Clustering Exercise showcase the value of collaboration.
- Networking opportunities facilitated the exchange of ideas and the identification of future partnerships.

## **Feedback from Participants**

Participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about the event, highlighting key strengths and areas for improvement:

### **Strengths:**

- Many attendees praised the networking opportunities, particularly the interactive sessions such as the Thematic Projects Marketplace and Geo-Clustering Exercise. These activities facilitated meaningful exchanges and strengthened connections within the community.



- The clarity and relevance of the high-level panel discussions were noted as significant, offering practical insights into marine restoration policy and its implementation.
- Participants appreciated the informal yet professional atmosphere of the event, which encouraged open dialogue and collaboration.

### Suggestions for Improvement:

- Several participants recommended allocating more time for facilitated discussions and exchanges to delve deeper into collaborative opportunities.
- Timing and intensity were noted as challenges, with suggestions to incorporate short breaks or relaxing activities to maintain energy levels.
- A few attendees proposed earlier distribution of preparatory materials, such as the policy paper, to ensure more constructive engagement during working group sessions.

## Event Materials

- All the pictures from the event can be accessed [through this link](#).
- All the presentations from the event can be accessed [through this link](#).

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