

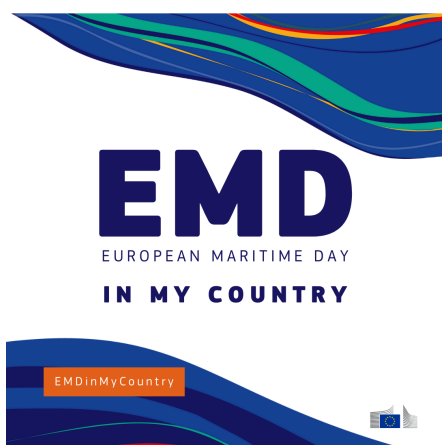


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## **“Governance solutions for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas” workshop**

### **Post-Event Summary**

**Date:** July 03rd, 2025

**Location:** NTUA Campus, Athens, Greece

**Organizers:** National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) and Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency (NECCA), partners of the Interreg Euro-MED Natural Heritage Mission

### **Aim of the event**

The aim of the European Maritime Day In My Country workshop on “Governance solutions for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas” was to empower mostly Greek MPA managers but also other relevant stakeholders by introducing solutions, e.g., tools and strategies produced by projects -of the Interreg Euro-MED Natural Heritage Mission and other EU Programmes- that could be potentially used/adopted in the management of their areas.

### **Summary of Roundtable Discussions**

At the **Governance roundtable**, [TUNE UP](#), [GreenList4MMPAs](#) and [COASTRUST](#) projects shared the goal of promoting sustainable and shared management of marine and coastal areas in the Mediterranean. They aim to strengthen decision-making processes for a more effective management of marine and coastal areas, to promote collaboration among various stakeholders (e.g., governments, local communities, environmental organizations, and the private sector), to ensure shared and participatory resource management, to improve institutional capacities, and to promote integrated policies that support biodiversity protection and sustainable resource use. In summary, the three projects complement each other in strengthening multi-level governance and fostering a more collaborative and inclusive approach. During the discussion, it was highlighted that Stewardship Strategies in Target Areas is an efficient tool to be used at a local level when a territory needs an immediate answer to specific actions and doesn't need to be part of a common strategy. Specifically in Italy, the use of stewardship is still not recognised. As for the Environmental contracts, they require collaborative management through the adoption of multi-level governance models and are a more complex overall management than the stewardship itself.



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The **Restoration roundtable** included PosBeMed2 project working on local awareness, passive restoration (e.g., closing beaches) and eco-label awarding (e.g. blue flag), ARTEMIS project assessing restoration tailor-made techniques, ecosystem-based services, and payment schemes, and Life Transfer project dealing with active restoration by transplanting sea grass in Mar Menor (Spain), Venice and Northern Adriatic Sea (Italy), and the Ionian Sea (Greece). The first common finding was that restoration is not possible if it is not community-led. Local ecological knowledge is very important and needs to be taken into account in order to select the best restoration technique, and also to confront unexpected problems like restoring healthy ecosystems. NECCA representatives explained the procedure to acquire the authorization to restore and who to address in case of 'illegal' restoration in Greece. All agreed on the fact that restoration should be regulated, monitored, and scientifically assessed. The payment schemes for ecosystem services were part of the discussion and raised several concerns about who can use them and on what terms. The market should be regulated, and the procedures should be certified, to safeguard these new procedures of greenwashing. Of course, not all 'locations' start from zero, as there are markets more mature than others.

MedSeaRise and INVALIDIS projects were at the core of the discussions within the **Climate Change Adaptation roundtable**. MedSeaRise addresses the topic of sea level rise in the Mediterranean because of climate change and the uncertainties of the existing scenarios used. INVALIDIS enabled the participating territorial authorities to address common challenges associated with biological invasions, proposing specific educational material. During the discussion, an example of the impact of climate change was given in the Ionian Sea, where it can be spotted through the impact on sea turtles, since both temperatures and tourism have a direct effect on them. Humans can experience the climate change impact through variations in the sea level and lionfish population density, and higher surface water temperature in the Ionian Sea. The need to define more specific indicators, which could help in the quantification of the climate change impact, is prominent. MedSeaRise described the data used in the project, and the difficulty in finding ready-to-use data was stressed. Moreover, the definition and reoccurrence time of the extreme events and the ways to gain information on anthropogenic impacts via spatial planning were described. The methodology presented is possible to be used on a local scale after downscaling the data, given that there is data available in the region, while PAMU data can be used for MedSeaRise methodologies if available global data are used. The EU regulation on invasive species was used in INVALIDIS, having already been implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, but no eradication projects were carried out. To tackle this, multiple public awareness campaigns were performed to reduce the caused reactions. In conclusion, in an effort to respond to



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the question of whether the invasive species are considered good or bad, it was underlined that this is dependent on the acts of each State.

Finally, at the **Monitoring roundtable**, LIFE EL BIOS and MedEOS projects presented specific tools and methodologies developed in the project that could be applied in different areas. The discussion on LIFE EL BIOS highlighted that although the collection of data is beneficial, the accuracy and proper curation for the final users are priorities. The data access depends on the role of the users, with managers having increased access than the general public. The focus of the project was to use and verify the scientific literature data instead of citizen science or GBIF data. The sources of data used in the project varied and included descriptive and spatial information, earth observations, and remote sensors. Finally, it was stated that NECCA infrastructure can acquire data from international entities to combine with the validated Greek datasets; as an example, the collaboration with the University of Malaga was mentioned, which provided indicators of biodiversity. The process continued with the MedEOS project, which developed a services platform aimed at partners and data providers (DPs) for now. Data is obtained from combined satellites and sensors at a resolution and frequency that can be managed by the partners and hosted by NECCA; higher frequency data would be of help, but at an increased cost. The applications of the project were not commercialized and were not used by fishermen since it was not the scope of the project, but AUTH expressed interest in using them for research purposes.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

This event was the result of the collaborative work of a group of dedicated people who came together with a shared vision: to set the foundations for a strong collaboration on the topic of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The first step to achieve this goal was the creation of a very focused [cluster](#) aiming to organise an EMD In My Country workshop. The process is ongoing, and there is a wish for this workshop to serve as a basis for a future cluster on MPAs governance tools and solutions.

The event targeted a specific **audience**, mostly Greek MPA managers. The number of participants was 36, representing different entities (e.g., Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency - NECCA, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research - HCMR, Hellenic Society for Protection of Nature - HSPN, Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy, MedPAN), of which 7 were MPA or PAMU managers.

Following the feedback received from 8 of the participants, there will be a **follow-up in September** in order to initiate further discussions and, why not, foster a transfer of practical solutions and tools.