



**TEDEN SREDOZEMSKÉ OBALÉ
IN MAKROREGIONALNIH
STRATEGIJ**

Izola, Slovenija
18. – 22. september 2023

**MEDITERRANEAN COAST
AND MACRO-REGIONAL
STRATEGIES WEEK**

Izola, Slovenia
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Operationalising Global and EU targets for marine conservation for 2030, through prioritising discussions for the AIR EBSAs as a examples for integrating marine conservation into regional MSP frameworks.

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2030 COMMITMENTS

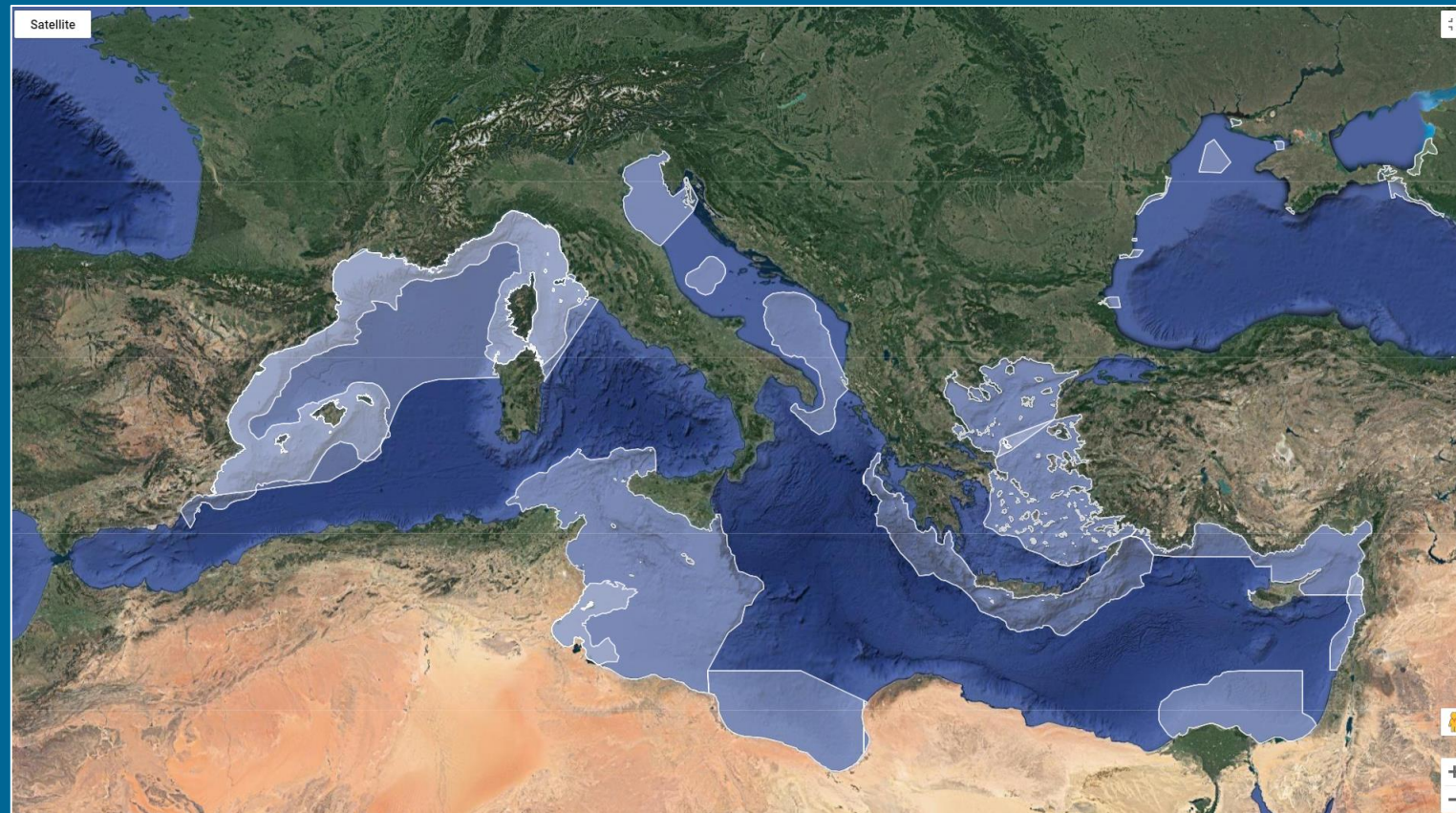
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has set new global targets to **effectively conserve and manage 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas by 2030**.
 - In the marine environment, the contracting parties to the CBD's Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) must **balance concerns for biodiversity and climate strategies with the acceleration of the blue economy**, address anthropogenic pressures, such as energy production, and ensure equitable access to marine resources.
- The EU Biodiversity Strategy targets **at least 30% of the EU area under protection with one third under 'strict protection'**.
 - The Biodiversity Strategy is the part of the **EU Green Deal which seeks to decouple economic growth** from resource use.
- The UNEP/MAP Post 2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Mediterranean Region (SAPBIO) requires that **100% of MPAs, and as appropriate OECMs, and 50% of the remaining marine areas are 'sustainably managed'** by applying the ecosystem-based tools.
 - Between 2020-2021, three coordination meetings were held to **identify potential concrete priority areas that could support EU Mediterranean countries** to pursue the targets of 10% strictly protected and 30% effectively managed conservation areas in the Mediterranean.

2030 COMMITMENTS

- While the EBSAs were **not originally conceived to be a means to develop transboundary MSPs** there has been increasing recognition of their value as a tool for the implementation of **ecosystem-based management (EBM)**
- Balancing the growing demands on the marine environment with the 2030 conservation goals provides **an opportunity to operationalise the value of EBSAs within MSP frameworks**, especially in regions where EBSAs overlap with different country jurisdictions.
- These are areas where we know **collaboration in the management of marine biodiversity is the most efficient approach** to achieving positive, cost-effective strategies.

MEDITERRANEAN ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS (EBSAs)

- 2014: UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC regional workshop **identified 17 EBSAs of which 15** were included in the EBSAs Repository.



ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION EBSAs (AIR-EBSAs)

- **Three EBSAs are wholly within the AIR:**
 - Northern Adriatic
 - Jabuka/Pomo Pit
 - South Adriatic Ionian Straight
- **One partially within AIR:**
 - Hellenic Trench
- **One adjacent to the AIR:**
 - Sicilian Channel



SOUTHERN ADRIATIC-IONIAN STRAIGHT EBSA (SAIS-EBSA)

- **2019** – The PANACeA Interreg MED project (2016-2019) hosts workshop ‘Towards an action plan for the Ecosystem-based management on the Southern Adriatic Ecoregion’ identifies pressures, conservation measures, governance mechanisms, policy tools and commitments that need to be made to ensure the management of the region.
- **2021** – Second workshop as part of the **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community (MBPC)** Interreg MED project. A **Draft Action Plan and Roadmap** was developed identifying a range of governance tools for the sustainable use of the SAIS-EBSA.
- **2022** – Third workshop as part of the MBPC project finalised the **Action Plan and Roadmap**



SAIS-EBSA CONSERVATION COMMUNITY (SECC)

The SAIS-EBSA process has been widely supported by the scientific community through the MBPC and the creation of the **SAIS-EBSA Conservation Community (SECC)**:

1. Governance analysis

- Policy frameworks at **EU, Mediterranean and macro-regional scale**, including FRAs, PSSAs and other OECMs and MPAs
- Identification of the **Joint Commission for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea**

2. Preliminary Marxan analysis

- Analysis of **57 biodiversity features** aimed to meet conservation targets.
- Creation of **two Scenarios**:
 - Meeting the conservation targets with the **smallest possible footprint**
 - Meeting the conservation target while **minising impacts to users of industries**



POLICY PAPER FOR THE DEFINITION OF A GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE SOUTH ADRIATIC-IONIAN STRAIGHT ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREA (SAIS-EBSA)

Study prepared as part of Work Package 5 of the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community, funded by the Interreg Mediterranean Programme

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This policy paper is built upon [previous publications](#) and [contributions to the MBPC project](#), and exchanges with participants from the [Dubrovnik workshop](#) undertaken in May-June 2022.

Key themes #1 – Identify a common starting point

- The EBSAs provide an **entry point for discussion about the development of a systematic conservation planning process within an MSP framework**, as the Contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention have already agreed on the importance of these sites.
- While the process was **largely led by the scientists and policymakers mandated to oversee biodiversity conservation**, it has **initiated discussions within other regional institutions** that focus on blue growth and fisheries.
- Further developing a DST-MSP in the region will **require access to policy makers** at all levels and **key representatives of industry stakeholders**.
- There is an urgent need to **identify key leading bodies and develop motivational hooks**, including **economic strategies**, to ensure meaningful and equitable engagement.

Key themes #2 - Capitalize on the network to enact change from within policy arenas.

- There remains a perception that **the Blue Economy cannot exist alongside conservation** in the AIR.
- While there is **global recognition that nature conservation is fundamental** to key priorities like climate change resilience, food security and the green energy transition.
- This requires that the two main influential regional institutions for environmental conservation, **the Barcelona Convention, and the EU, step up their engagement**, provide entry points to other policy makers, and **mainstream the importance of nature**.
- The **Components of the UNEP/MAP and the EUSAIR TSG3** has played a fundamental role so far.
 - But it is now important to **engage promote the SAIS-EBSA initiative is a priority for the whole EUSAIR Forum, not just the TSG3**.
- Building on the **relationships between the regional authorities, their focal points, and the national authorities**, efforts should be made to show how **the SAIS-EBSA, and other EBSAs in the AIR, provide an opportunity** to fulfil international and regional targets for conservation while maintaining a sustainable blue economy.
- The **national and regional authorities remain important decision makers** and their role will be critical throughout to ensure the legitimacy of this process.

Key themes #3 - Addressing power dynamics is an essential part of the process.

- Often the **imbalance of power** between partners is **ignored to the detriment of the process**.
- Applying **systematic conservation planning at regional level** will place a **greater conservation burden on some countries or regions**, due to the differences in costs and benefits.
- There are **not only differences in State power dynamics**, but also between **sectors and stakeholders** with real implications for who gets access to which resources.
- **Ignoring this reality creates an inability to reconcile power imbalances**, and ultimately, define equitable benefits from MSP processes.
- Efforts must be made to **balance the SAIS-EBSA initiative with existing mechanisms**, including exploring the role of the **Joint Commission for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea**.
 - The Commission should be supported by **legal mechanisms to address power imbalances**.
 - Lessons can be learned from **other transboundary conservation initiatives** including the **BBNJ discussions** where a political agreement has led to the development of an **Internationally Legally Binding Instrument (ILBI)**.
 - These precedents provide **examples of the movement from recognition to operationalisation** of international cooperation, considering the power dynamics in play.

Key theme #4 - Capacity building is critical to achieving our 2030 goals.

- The obligations of the GBF and other strategies and frameworks means that there is a **real risk of rushed processes and bad spatial planning** happening.
- This includes the potential for the **redefinition of conservation so that all OECMs and spatially planned areas** are considered for the **30%**.
- Emphasis must be on **building specific capacity** within the region:
 - i. Economic value – **biodiversity and the ecosystem services** currently provided,
 - ii. Regional vulnerability – **climate change and biodiversity are interlinked**, and the role of **nature-based solutions**
 - iii. Conservation **costs and burdens**, but also the **potential costs of doing nothing**.
- To support these measures, a **concerted and funded skills programme** should focus on:
 - **economic valuation, spatial economics, legal opinion, and decision support tools.**
 - Embedding the existing multidisciplinary expert network and coordinating capacity building through a **biodiversity-based boundary organisation is needed.**
 - The **creation of a biodiversity-based boundary organisation within the AIR would provide credibility and coordination, and an example for the Mediterranean.**

Conclusions and next steps

- After four years of collaboration, it is important that the **momentum created by the SAIS-EBSA process is maintained and amplified through a systematic and replicable process.**
- The aim should be to **assist decision makers to move to a stable transboundary MSP framework which prioritises conservation.**
- The next steps should be a **workshop bringing together diverse national authorities to discuss the EBSA governance processes**, the formal commitment of national authorities is essential.
- The success of this initiative can **directly feed into the development of the four other EBSAs** in and around the AIR, the 15 EBSAs in the Mediterranean and beyond.
 - A final thought that we would encourage is recognition of the dichotomy between **national requirements** to report on national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) while **transboundary areas epitomise the nature of the connectivity** of the marine environment.
 - The development of **regional, collaborative BSAPs** would recognize the connective and shared responsibility over natural marine resources.