

COOPERATION IDEA

Fisheries Local Action Groups

Creation and implementation of a knowledge-based platform on Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and socio-economic development in the Mediterranean

We would like to create a **common knowledge-based platform among FLAGs on the specific topic of MPA and socio-economic development**. In order to build this platform, we would gather several FLAG representatives in workshops to exchange about existing socio-economic development strategies, best practices and their keys to success in the context of MPAs. Each workshop would take place in a specific FLAG area which would provide a case study for the workshop to focus on.

Each FLAG would provide the venue and logistics for the workshop organized in its area. It would also be responsible for writing up the outcomes and developing relevant communication support that could be used by the entire FLAG network.

This project proposal is addressed to FLAGs with experience in MPA-related socio-economic development strategies to participate in the workshops and enrich the discussion with their knowledge (choosing the right development strategy, implementation process, stakeholders engagement, carrying capacity assessment, etc.). Less mature FLAGs that are also dealing with MPA-related issues may also be relevant to join the project to learn from the network and offer case studies to work on during the workshops.

1. Objectives

The creation and implementation of a knowledge-based platform with three main objectives:

- Increasing FLAGs' capacity to foster socio-economic development around MPAs
- Providing concrete socio-economic development solutions to identified FLAG areas (workshop hosts)
- Fostering collaboration among FLAGs

2. Proposed actions

Several workshops would take place within the next years. They should take place where most relevant: in areas where connecting MPAs and socio-economic development is a top priority. Such places could be identified thanks to the FLAGs network.

A first workshop could take place in Syros, a Greek island from the Cyclades area and the headquarters of the Cyclades FLAG. Syros island is located close to Gyaros, an MPA with a high biodiversity value (it has been identified as one of the last monk seal nursing areas in the Mediterranean) whose key features are currently being defined. Apart from its ecological value, the area also concentrates socio-economic stakes: tourism has been developed in recent years and traditional fisheries remain an important activity (98% of fishing vessels are small coastal boats).

In this context, the Cyclades FLAG aims to conciliate the environmental protection of Gyaros island and sustainable socio-economic development of the activities in the surrounding area. This is an important challenge and we would thus benefit from other FLAGs' experience as well as providing a great topic for a case study.

The Cyclades Economic Development Agency, DG MARE and the FARNET Support Unit are aware of this initiative and support the idea. Other stakeholders from the area could also provide their insights during the workshop (NGOs, fishermen, etc.).

3. Desired results

From the workshops, we expect to gather good practices and develop methodologies, in order to be able to engage our regions in a sustainable socio-economic development, increasing employment, while protecting our ecosystems through the MPA network.

This collaboration between FLAGs could be followed by the production of several communication tools:

- A manual on "MPAs and socio-economic development" bringing together all best practices and ideas which emerge during the workshops.
- Webinar for all FLAGs.
- Others to be identified.

Thematic categories: Integrated coastal management; Pesca-tourism; Marine activities

Looking for partner located: in the Mediterranean

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