

Seminar Highlights



FARNET TRANSNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR FLAGS ONLINE, 25-27 November 2020 Seminar for the Mediterranean and Black Sea FLAGS

Organisers: FARNET, at the initiative of the European Commission
Participants: More than 120 participants included FLAGS, local actors, managing authorities, national networks, experts and representatives of DG MARE

This online seminar organised by the FARNET Support Unit at the initiative of DG MARE aimed to help coastal FLAGS from the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins target their 2021-2027 resources at key challenges facing their areas, through focused strategies and effective local projects, and to facilitate exchange and joint learning on common themes. It was also an opportunity to link FLAGS to additional sources of funding, which could support joint action around the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

SETTING THE SCENE - OPENING PLENARY



Stylianos Mitolidis, DG MARE Head of Unit for Structural Support in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Landlocked Countries

- Geographical, climatic and biological factors make the Mediterranean and the Black Sea very different from other sea basins (overfishing; invasive species; large number of small-scale coastal fishermen; high amount of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; international management shared with third countries).
- CLLD can play an important role: helping coastal communities to adopt local solutions; enabling fisheries/aquaculture sectors to play an active role in local governance; boosting local economic diversification; fostering a sustainable blue economy, in line with the key priorities of the [European Commission for 2021-2027](#) which include: recovery and resilience, green transition, digital transition (mainstreaming innovation for competitiveness and sustainability), and ensuring optimal value added and leverage of public support.

“FLAGS should build better, more efficient and added-value projects by taking into consideration existing best practices and new opportunities.”

Marco Costantini, WWF

Conditions for keeping this ecosystem healthy: sustainable development; sustainable blue finance; better implementation of policies (including zero tolerance for non-compliance); improved regional governance.

WWF action in the Mediterranean focuses on two key priorities: 100% fish stocks sustainably managed by 2025, and at least 30% of the whole basin protected with effectively and equitably managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

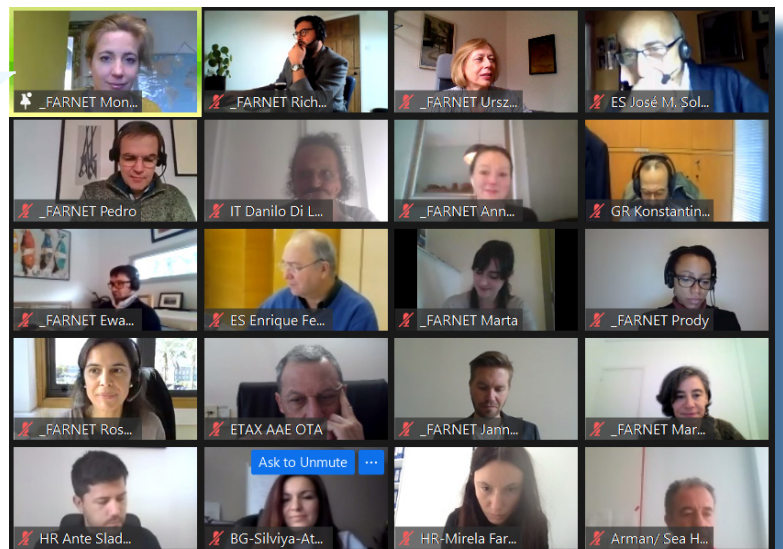


“Decades of damaging, and often unregulated, economic activity in the Mediterranean Sea have taken a toll – the region’s ecological health is in decline.”

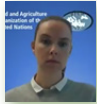
Monica Veronesi, Team Leader of the FARNET Support Unit

Key features of quality projects, should:

- Respond to a real need at local level (including of specific groups/individuals)
- Build on local resources (human and/or natural)
- Bring about positive change, for example to the: local economy, environment, capacity and ability of the community, and the well-being and self-fulfilment of community members
- Contribute to long-term improvements in the area
- Offer value for money (justifying the investment of public money)
- Complement other local projects, building synergies and feeding into a bigger vision for the area



Participants discussed the most important challenges to Mediterranean and Black Sea coastal areas focusing on four key themes.

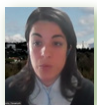


SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

Presentation by Anna Carlson, Fisheries Officer, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

- Small-scale fisheries (SSF), represent 84% of the fishing fleet in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region and provide livelihood for over 150 000.
- SSF facing major environmental, climate-related, and socio-economic challenges.
- Following several SSF-related initiatives by the GFCM over the past decade, the Regional Plan of Action for Small Scale Fisheries (RPOA-SSF) was adopted in 2018 and will be implemented 2018-2028. It is a non-binding instrument which aims to reinforce the development of sustainable artisanal fisheries in both sea basins. The actions include scientific research, data collection, management measures for small-scale fisheries, value chain, participatory decision-making processes, cooperation, decent work, women's role, and climate and environment.

Working group participants were asked assess FLAGs' current experience and future potential in contributing to the RPOA-SSF actions, and reflect on innovative project ideas to enhance implementation of the Action Plan. Many FLAGs are already playing pivotal role in contributing to these actions and strengthening the voice of Mediterranean and Black Sea fishers. However, FLAGs could be more active in involving SSFs more efficiently in fisheries governance frameworks and MPA management, as well as in projects focused on water quality monitoring, fish waste and marine litter collection. They could also play a more active role in creating partnerships between fishers and scientific institutions. In conclusion, there is a need for collaborative efforts and improved coordination from all stakeholders, since the complexity of the Mediterranean and Black Sea ecosystems and fisheries, and the nature of the challenges faced cannot be addressed by each country individually.



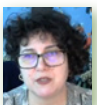
KEEPING TOURISM SUSTAINABLE

Presentation by Carla Danelutti, IUCN, on the MEET network, which helps protected areas develop ecotourism products, while providing tools to help measure and reduce the ecological footprint of tourism activities.



Building tourism products with local communities and local service providers is important. FLAGs can bring together clusters of stakeholders, including from Protected Areas and the private tourism sector.

FLAGs discussed the different stakeholders they might mobilise to promote low impact tourism in their areas and the sorts of tourism products that should receive FLAG support. They talked about the potential ecological footprint of such projects and how to reduce this as much as possible. Ideas included: converting pesca-tourism boats to renewable energy; ensuring that food on offer to tourists is locally captured or produced, including an increased offer from aquaponics; training for fishers and collaboration with local authorities to showcase environmental actions; and the creation of a sustainability label for tourism products.



PROTECTING THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Presentation by Valeria Abaza, Romanian Institute for Marine Research and Development, on environmental challenges faced in the Black Sea including pollution, overfishing and eutrophication.

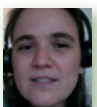
Key message: "our seas have no borders", reiterating the importance of cooperation and regional approaches to protecting marine environments.



Presentation by Susan Gallon, Scientific Manager of the Network for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), on the importance of MPAs and the value of networking.

Key takeaway: MedPAN's six ingredients for making MPAs more effective, which include stakeholder engagement, boundaries and regulation, data (ecological and socio-cultural), management planning, a local management unit, and communication and awareness.

Working group participants used the six MedPAN ingredients as a basis for developing ideas on how FLAGs can best contribute to making protected areas more effective. A common theme was how FLAGs can contribute to stakeholder engagement – more specifically, how they can bring different groups together and bridge barriers of trust. FLAGs can encourage collaborative action between fishers and MPA actors and in showing fishers that they too can benefit from protecting the environment. Another main topic was the role FLAGs can play in communication and awareness. Ideas on this theme centred around awareness through education for fishers, but also for FLAG areas more generally. Project ideas included MPAs being used as part of an area's tourism offer or being part of educational initiatives for the youth, and FLAGs facilitating the monitoring or protected areas. For example, FLAGs could bring stakeholders together to generate better data on the local environment by connecting universities/research institutes with fishers and other stakeholders.



SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

Presentation by Julia Rubeck, DG MARE Policy Officer for Aquaculture and International Maritime Spatial Planning, on the current initiative of the European Commission to review the strategic guidelines for EU aquaculture.

- The guidelines (expected to be adopted in early 2021), cover such topics as administrative burden, access to space and water, environmental performance, climate change adaptation, consumer information, human/animal health and animal welfare, producers and market organisation, innovation integration in local economy and control.
- FLAGs can play an important role in implementing the guidelines at the local level, through training and investment support to help aquaculture producers adopt more sustainable practices; awareness raising on aquaculture, thus improving perceptions of the sector; supporting small-scale producers to promote their activities; and widely disseminating the guidelines.



Working group participants discussed ideas on FLAG actions to develop more sustainable aquaculture by working with the producers, consumers, authorities, environmental actors and researchers. Practical suggestions included: communication and consumer information projects on sustainable aquaculture; explaining positive environmental impacts of shellfish farming, linked with EC activities and campaigns; support for creating pilot aquaculture farms open to the public; interaction and integration between fish and aquaculture sectors; continuous monitoring of aquaculture plants to keep the environment healthy; networking all stakeholders such as schools, processing plants, restaurants; informing the local public about environmental impact of aquaculture; and building trust between the local economy (including tourism) and aquaculture producers.

FLAGs could seek inspiration and joint action opportunities with other initiatives active in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region.



MedCoast4BG, Tourism, Climate change & ICZM

[Med Coasts for Blue Growth](#) analyses and promotes the co-evolution of human activities (especially tourism) and natural systems in coastal areas of nine Mediterranean countries.



SMILO projects, ecotourism and sustainable islands

[SMILO](#) (Small Islands Organisation) is an NGO whose mission is to support small islands that wish to adopt a more sustainable way of managing their areas, certifying them with the SMILO label. This international recognition highlights the conservation challenges and promotes those islands.



TOURISMED, Sustainable fisheries tourism

[TOURISMED](#) aims at testing and transferring a fishing tourism business model in the coastal territories of Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Albania, France and Spain to promote a sustainable approach to tourism, fostering the preservation of the marine ecosystem and the traditional fishing culture.



PlasticBusters, MPAs and marine litter

[Plastic Busters](#) MPAs provides a comprehensive, multi-faceted and coordinated approach to fighting marine litter in Mediterranean coastal and MPAs, and works towards healthy marine ecosystems.



Meltemi project, marine litter & education in the Med and Black Sea

[MELTEMI](#) promotes cooperation between Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Cyprus against marine litter. Along with assessing marine litter, MELTEMI aims to enhance the legal framework and the capacity of public authorities, stakeholders and society at large on mitigating marine litter pollution.



FishMPABlue2, MPAs & Co-management

[FishMPABlue](#) carried out an analysis of the management of small-scale fishery within and around a set of Mediterranean MPAs and developed a “regional-based governance toolkit” to strengthen MPA management capacity of SSF.



MedFish/Blufish/Hellasfish

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the WWF have jointly launched these [three projects](#) to carry out a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of various Mediterranean fisheries using the MSC Fisheries Standard as a benchmark for sustainability.



FAIRSEA, sustainable management of the Adriatic Sea fisheries

[FAIRSEA](#) seeks to improve conditions for implementing innovative approaches for the sustainable management of the Adriatic Sea fisheries, through the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of good practices among partners and beyond.



Professional fishing: Transforming Balearic Fisheries

The [project](#) aims to reduce the negative impacts of fishing, while improving the sustainability, carrying out field research, and meeting with fishers on the four Balearic islands to transform their fishing fleet into one of the most sustainable in the Mediterranean.

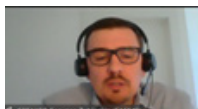


ORTO project: aquaculture & ecosystem restoration in the Black Sea

[ORTO](#) is industrial technology, based on the patented Pisa Reef™ model, for offshore cultivation of mussels and aquaculture, without the use of any animal feed, mimicking the natural coral reefs' environmentally positive effects.

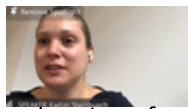
ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

Seminar participants also had the chance to meet representatives of public and private funders active in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins, to find out about their priorities and discuss the possibilities of cooperation in the future. Presentations included:



LIFE

The [LIFE](#) program is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action created in 1992. The current funding period 2014-2020 has a budget of €3.4 billion. Since its creation, LIFE has supported more than 5 400 projects within and outside of Europe.



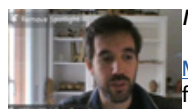
ADESSIUM

[Adessium Foundation](#) is a private fund based in the Netherlands which supports initiatives and projects focusing on topics of social importance. Adessium provides financial and strong organisational support to develop the grantee's capacities. Adessium foundation supports initiatives within three axes: (1) Public interest (2) People & Nature (3) Social Initiatives.



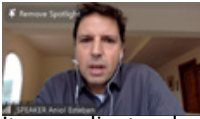
Oceans 5

[Oceans 5](#) focuses on reducing overfishing and establishing marine reserves, which provide tangible and lasting benefits to the world's oceans. It strives for a portfolio of projects that maximise the size and effectiveness of an MPA, maximise the global impact of fisheries management improvements, taking into account the size and ecological importance of the fisheries, as well as the innovation and replicability of the management tools.



MAVA

[MAVA](#) is a professional foundation which not only funds projects developed by groups of partners working together, but also stewards them on their conservation journey, supporting them in developing the needed skills and delivering abilities.



Marilles Foundation

[Marilles](#) is a foundation dedicated to the conservation of the Balearic Sea and coast.

It co-ordinates local efforts and funding power to derive the most effective means of conserving the Balearic Sea. Marilles encourages dialogue between experts and organisations to tackle environmental challenges, and promotes the efficiency of MPAs, sustainable and low impact fisheries and an engaged society.

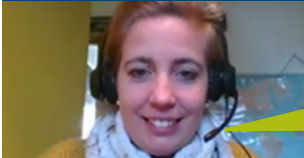


Blue Seeds

[Blue Seeds](#) is a service agency ensuring the financial sustainability of conservation projects

and maximising their economic, environmental and social impacts. Blue Seeds works as technical assistants on long term projects, adapting their tools to the needs of each stakeholder and replicating successful initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS



“FLAGs need to be more ambitious in developing high quality, innovative projects and laying the ground for sustained long-term change in fishing communities. They can play the role of ‘innovation machines.’”

Monica Veronesi, Team Leader of the FARNET Support Unit

Monica Veronesi concluded the seminar with some key words and concepts that were discussed:

- Sustainability – particularly environmental sustainability as a condition for the sustainability of human activities such as fisheries, aquaculture or tourism. The situation of marine ecosystems in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions is serious and action is needed now.
- Partnership: FLAGs are key in building trust between and bringing together stakeholders, to work together to address the issues facing fisheries areas around the Med and Black Sea. They can: help set up MPAs; bridge the gap between fisheries and science; ensure tourism development delivers community benefits and respects the environment; and mobilise a wide range of actors to make aquaculture environmentally, sustainable, profitable and appreciated by the community.
- Collective learning and data: FLAGs can: facilitate data collection and monitoring on the impact of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture plants; collect data on marine litter; involve fishermen in training and cooperation activities; and build human capital in the local community.

