



Ocean
Governance



EuropeAid/139855/DH/SER/MULTI

Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems, catalysts
for building peace and security and fostering sustainable
economies, South Asia and Atlantic Ocean basin

Project newsletter

No. 1/2020



Foreword

Greetings!

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Ocean Governance project! We plan to publish a project newsletter twice a year to share news and activities from the project and offer an insight into each focus region.

We hope you find it an interesting read!

The Ocean Governance project team

About the project

The Ocean Governance project is a three-year project (January 2020–December 2022) funded from the EU Partnership Instrument. It was commissioned by the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) which puts EU foreign policy into action, as response to the EU Joint Communication on International Ocean Governance and the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. It builds on the Transatlantic MPA Network Project, which was financed by the EU from 2016–2019, and aims to establish the European Union (EU) as a global actor in international ocean governance. It applies an integrated and cross-sectoral approach using regional and interregional cooperation relevant to the restoration and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems.

The project is implementing activities in two areas: South East Asia and the Atlantic Basin. In South East Asia, activities at three restoration sites are focused on increasing knowledge and practice in protecting and conserving coastal and marine ecosystems (component 1), and on improving the basis for transboundary dialogue among marine and coastal stakeholders (component 4). In the Atlantic Basin, the project operates within three twinning projects, which seek to improve the effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) using the concept of shared environmental protection (component 2). To link both project areas and enhance their cooperation, an additional component is designed to strengthening knowledge exchange between the Atlantic and Southeast Asian on marine and coastal conservation issues (component 3). Promoting networking among MPA managers and strengthening existing MPA manager networks in both regions constitutes the leitmotiv of this project.

Background

The Ocean Governance project builds on the EU project '**Cooperation with Northern and Southern Transatlantic Dimension – Marine Protected Areas**' (2016–2019), which aimed to broaden the discussion on the effective management of MPAs on both rims of the Atlantic with a view to protecting marine biodiversity. The main results were: 1) the preparation of a scoping study: an inventory of good practices and shortcomings in the existing MPAs in the Atlantic Basin; 2) the creation and implementation of three twinning projects across the Atlantic MPAs to support effective MPA management; and 3) the development of tools regarding resilience and marine mammals (the topics of two of the twinning projects) and the introduction of a project webpage for information exchange.

About us

The project Consortium of GOPA (leader), WWF Indonesia and B&S Europe was awarded the contract in November 2019. The Consortium brings together EU contract management experience gained under large multi-stakeholder programmes with expertise in the technical fields covered by the project.

Project management team

FPI Project Manager: Ms Helena Laakso

Project Director (Consortium): Ms Nadia Moutawakkil

Finance and Contract Manager (Consortium): Ms Hoai Huong Doan

Junior Coordinator (Consortium): Mr Filip Forster

Project core team of experts

Coordinator of the core team and technical expert with focus on networks of MPA managers:

Ms Maria Purificació Canals i Ventín

Technical expert with focus on conservation and sustainable use of natural – terrestrial, coastal and marine resources:

Mr Francis Staub

Technical expert with focus on coastal resilience of marine and coastal areas:

Mr Jean-Jacques Goussard

Technical expert with focus on restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems in South East Asia:

Mr I Wayan Veda Santiaji

Project News

Kick-off workshop

On 14 January 2020, a kick-off meeting was held in Brussels, attended by the Consortium representatives, the FPI manager, the EU Steering Committee members and the project core team. The meeting discussed the approaches and strategies for implementing the project and incorporated suggestions from members of the EU Steering Committee. The participants exchanged on expected issues and outcomes, previous experiences, upcoming activities, and synergies and cooperation expected with other EU-funded projects. The workshop marked the launch of the project and enabled participants to meet each other. The project and its previous phases were presented and the attendees discussed approaches and strategies for the project, upcoming activities, previous experiences and future cooperation.

COVID-19 situation

Since March 2020, with the COVID-19 outbreak developing into a global pandemic, the project has had to adjust its activities and strategy. Lockdowns and travel restrictions have impeded (and continue to do so) face-to-face meetings, the supply of deliverables and the implementation of project activities.

Components 1 and 4 were particularly affected as in both cases, dialogue processes were planned for both starting phases. In practice, virtual meetings were held when conditions allowed. The current global health situation is now a key factor in project planning, as the health and safety of all must be guaranteed.

Internship of Ms Sarah Cantarella

In mid-April 2020, Ms Sarah Cantarella joined GOPA Consultants as an intern and is working specifically with the Ocean Governance Project. She studies politics and public administration at the University of Konstanz and is working with the team for six months (until mid-October 2020). So far, Ms Cantarella's tasks have included identifying potential communication channels and content for the project, creating a graphic presenting the project within the EU context and taking charge of this project's newsletter.

Activities and Results

Inception Phase: starting the project

During the inception phase (mid-January 2020 to mid-April 2020), the project team held meetings and working sessions with the EU FPI project manager Helena Laakso. Two consultation meetings took place with the EU Steering Committee (one in Brussels and one virtual meeting). The objective was to review the proposed strategy and activities taking into account changes in circumstances, practical issues and recommendations from the EU Steering Committee and Ms Laakso. Virtual meetings took place with existing and potential partners in the private and institutional sector from both project areas.

An inception report produced during this period clarifies the links between the focus areas for all four components and proposes a working plan for efficient project implementation.

Project Communication and Visibility

The project team has elaborated a communication and visibility (C&V) strategy in order to achieve the overall objective to establish the EU as a global actor in international ocean governance.

The strategy proposes communication instruments to support the project in increasing the EU's visibility amongst relevant audiences and to communicate the expected benefits of the project among MPA managers within the focus areas and between them. The project will use existing communication channels managed by the EU, EU Delegations and project partners to publish and share content instead creating new communication structures that are difficult to maintain. The project team has finalised the C&V strategy. The next step is to create a communication and visibility plan.

Scoping Study of Atlantic MPAs

An update of the Atlantic scoping study will also be produced as part of the Ocean Governance Project. The initial study conducted at the start of the Transatlantic MPA program, included an in-depth review of the main biophysical characteristics of the Atlantic basin, as well as a review of the marine and coastal conservation system and its various governance arrangements. The study helped to identify the themes of the three twinning projects in the Transatlantic MPA project, as well as some of the main partners.

The present update aims to identify key phenomena and impacts on the Atlantic marine and coastal conservation system since 2016. Once updated, the study will be shared in an attractive format. It will also include inserts on good practices identified within the Atlantic MPAs.

The initial version was accompanied by a detailed map of the Atlantic basin at a scale of 1/16 million in A0 format. The updated map will be presented at a larger scale (probably 1/8 million) in the form of an atlas.

Around ten partners have been identified to contribute to the update, to which will be added Atlantic MPA networks and other resources, notably from the EU's Copernicus programme related to marine environment monitoring.

Restoration Sites in the South East Asian Region

The Consortium proposed the Sulu Sulawesi Seascape within the Coral Triangle for the restoration of marine ecosystems. In order to select the most suitable sites for this restoration works, the project team collected data on ecological, Economic, sociological and political factors impacting the identified sites and created a matrix for displaying the best options. Restoration activities will be conducted at three sites that will be selected on the basis of the matrix. Further developments will be included in the relevant reports in a timely manner.

Twinning Project Partners

The Ocean Governance project will continue the work initiated under the previously EU-funded Transatlantic MPA project in relation to the three twinning projects (on marine mammals, MPA networks and resilience).

The objective of the marine mammals twinning project is to improve MPA manager's skills, particularly with regard to marine mammals. For the resilience twinning project, the aim is to establish resilience based management by expanding MPAs' capacities, as well as the social utility of MPAs.

The third twinning project, MPA Networks, intends to build the twinning partnership, update the Common Strategy of Atlantic MPA networks of managers and put it into action, and incorporate the knowledge and results of the other two twinning projects.

To ensure the smooth running of the twinning projects, the project team and experts worked with the twinning partners on the approach and related activities.

South East Asia: Sulu Sulawesi – selecting key sites in a marine treasure trove



The Sulu Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion is an underwater treasure trove of marine life and natural resources. It is encircled by the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia and sustains the lives of around 33 million people. The marine ecoregion is part of the Coral Triangle – the global centre of marine biodiversity. However, this marine paradise is threatened by over extraction, overfishing and worsening environmental conditions that erode the marine ecoregion's capacity for natural recovery. The three stakeholder governments developed the Sulu Sulawesi Conservation Action Plan in 2003 applying cross-boundary participatory and collaborative management. The Ocean Governance project will enhance the existing collaboration and support the implementation of restoration activities. The restoration activities will include awareness raising, stakeholder engagement and behavior change to reduce threats to the Sulu Sulawesi. To select the most critical sites for restoration, the Ocean Governance Consortium is using the following criteria as reference:

Level of stress: to select a restoration site, biophysical parameters are fundamental. Sites should be in areas that cannot recover on their own, but are ecologically feasible to be rehabilitated.

Stakeholder support: the first step towards rehabilitation is to involve local stakeholders, as they are the frontline actors in helping to reduce stressors on the ecosystem.

Economic feasibility: restoration cost should be minimised by garnering strong local participation. Furthermore, to cover ongoing costs and sustain restoration efforts after the project, innovative approaches in ecotourism are a solution.

Level of stress: looking at existing and expected stressors are important to assess threats to restoration sites.

At the end of the selection process, the Ocean Governance Consortium will identify three sites from Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines to conduct restoration activities. It was this selection process that was most affected by the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the consultation and validation process that was originally planned with all stakeholders in the three countries could not be carried out in its entirety because of the travel restrictions and bans on face-to-face meetings.

By Veda Santiaji

Atlantic Basin: Experience and extension of the Transatlantic MPA networks twinning



Since its beginning in 2017, the Transatlantic MPA networks twinning enabled the participating MPA networks of managers to identify what they had in common and discover the great potential of acting together. While being very diverse in terms of structure and governance, all of them share the common goals of supporting MPA managers to improve management effectiveness by means of capacity-building and exchange activities, specific databases, resource mobilization and supporting policies in favour of good MPA management. The twinning benefited from the commitment of four regional networks of managers: CaMPAM (Caribbean), MedPAN (Mediterranean), NAMPAN (North America) through the NOAA (USA) and RAMPAO (West Africa); plus, two national institutions: the French Biodiversity Agency and the Biodiversity Foundation (Spain). Together they identified a route to operate under a common strategy to strengthen their structures, launch a call for joint action, and act as a voice to represent MPA managers in political and technical processes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC 4) and the UN Ocean Conference. The cooperative approach has motivated other regional networks to join the twinning, which has reached new Atlantic areas with the inclusion of OSPAR (North East Atlantic), the Patagonian Forum (South West Atlantic) and Redparques (Latin America). Additionally, new partners from Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Senegal and Uruguay are also getting involved, and the twinning aims to invite further partners – especially from Africa – to achieve a broad and representative Atlantic participation.

By Puri Canals

Contact

Nadia Moutawakkil

Rural Development and Environment

GOPA mbH

Hindenburgring 18
61348 Bad Homburg, Germany

Tel +49 6172 930 0

Mail info@gopa.de

Web www.gopa.de

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