



United Nations
Environment
Programme



UNEP/WG.163/6
23 April 1987

Original : English

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

First Meeting of the National Focal Points
for Specially Protected Areas in the
Mediterranean

Athens 1-4 June 1987

DRAFT

GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION, ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT
OF PROTECTED AREAS
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Preface

1. Article 4 of the Protocol Concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas calls on the Parties at their first meeting to "formulate and adopt....common guidelines and, if needed, standards or criteria dealing in particular with:
 - a) the selection of protected areas;
 - b) the establishment of protected areas;
 - c) the management of protected areas;
 - d) the notification of information on protected areas".
2. The following draft guidelines take into account the regional as well as national importance of protected areas as provided for in Article 12 of the same Protocol, and above all the special characteristics of the Mediterranean marine system.
3. In accordance with Article 4, this draft has been prepared for review and eventual approval by the First Meeting of the Focal Points on Specially Protected Areas before submission to the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, to be held in conjunction with the next meeting of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention, for adoption.

Introduction

4. The Mediterranean is an enclosed sea, its waters do not respect national boundaries. To manage its resources requires considering it as a whole and planning a balanced system of protected areas to preserve all aspects of its environment.
5. The coastline is not a boundary, but a zone of interactions between the land and the sea, whether by fresh and salt-water or through the air (wind, spray).
6. The underlying concept of the Mediterranean Action Plan is its regional perspective. It does not aim to encourage the creation of national parks or nature reserves in isolation, but to include them in a Mediterranean-wide network aiming to create in the bordering countries a global consciousness of the importance of "Mare nostrum" for their survival and their development.
7. The priority objective of protected areas should be the protection of the characteristic environment, and especially its ecological diversity and its underlying ecological processes, as the best guarantee of the maintenance of genetic diversity and the protection of natural resources, ecosystems and individual species.
8. The social and economic aspects of environmental protection must be considered in the creation, maintenance and development of marine and coastal protected areas.
9. Protected areas are needed to assure the preservation of cultural, historical and archaeological sites, often in combination with the protection of natural features.

10. The management of the marine and coastal environment must involve not only protected areas, but the whole marine system of the Mediterranean. It must promote regional management of all factors affecting the environment to assure the protection of essential values and the conservation of resources.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF PROTECTED AREAS

Establish policies and objectives

11. The organization of a protected area programme should be based on clearly-defined policies and objectives approved by the highest levels of government. These could include:
 - the maintenance of the productivity of marine and coastal resources, and the reconstitution of depleted stocks;
 - the conservation of the richness and diversity of the country's natural resources, including examples of all representative ecosystems and habitats, and the genetic diversity of important species;
 - the preservation of important examples of the cultural heritage, such as archaeological and historical sites, architectural and landscape elements, and areas of ethnographic interest;
 - the sustainable development of resource exploitation, tourism and other economic activities; and
 - the protection of the health and safety of coastal communities and resource users.

Create a planning team

12. A planning team should be chosen to begin the process of selecting and establishing protected areas. A survey of the agencies, organizations and experts able to contribute to this planning team should be one of the first steps to be taken.

Survey the marine and coastal environment

13. Each country should survey its entire marine and coastal areas to identify sites worthy of protection. Existing information should be compiled and new surveys made if necessary to provide information on coastal features, natural habitats and species, and points of special interest. The surveys should consider:

- environmental characteristics such as species distributions and abundance, habitat occurrence according to a standard classification (for marine habitats see classification in Appendix 1), and physico-chemical parameters (climatology, geomorphology, hydrology, sedimentation, geochemistry, water quality);
- socio-economic uses and potential for recreation, tourism, fisheries and aquaculture;
- existing and potential threats from tourism, urbanization, industry, mining, drilling, dredging, dumping, agriculture, aquaculture, navigation and naval works.

14. Information from country surveys, bibliographic research and other sources should be compiled on a regional basis to determine regional patterns and processes. This can be done by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) with the assistance of a regional advisory group of experts.

15. The resulting national and regional inventories of natural sites and special features should be updated periodically.

Evaluate sites and features

16. All sites and features on which information has been collected should be evaluated according to criteria adopted by each country in accordance with their national goals and international obligations. Examples of criteria are:

- Ecological criteria: Diversity, Naturalness, Dependency of species or processes on the area, Representativeness, Uniqueness, Integrity, Productivity, Vulnerability.
- Social criteria: Social acceptance by local people, Public health, Recreation, Culture, History, Archaeology, Aesthetics, Conflicts of interest with local activities, Safety, Accessibility, Benchmark or Reference value, Education, Research.
- Economic criteria: Importance to commercial species, Importance to fisheries, Nature of threats to value of area, Economic benefits, Tourism.
- Regional criteria: Regional significance, national significance, Contribution to regional awareness, Demonstration of compatible uses.
- Pragmatic criteria: Urgency, Size, Degree of threat, Effectiveness, Opportunism, Availability, Restorability.

17. The development of regional definitions for selection criteria and of procedures for their application should be undertaken through the RAC/SPA with the assistance of experts and working groups.

Rank sites

18. Sites should be ranked both for their value according to each criterion, and their ability to meet multiple criteria, leading to listings of the highest priority sites for designation as protected areas.
19. Consultation with the RAC/SPA can help to identify sites of particular regional interest. This could be necessary, for instance, to protect a species of regional importance.

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS

Designate a responsible authority

20. There should be a single authority responsible for the establishment and management of marine and coastal protected areas, whether a newly created body, an existing lead agency, or a joint authority of several agencies or government departments.
21. The authority should be given clearly-defined objectives and responsibilities.
22. The authority should have powers to:
 1. Define institutional responsibilities and relations;
 2. Co-ordinate the activities of the different departments with marine and coastal responsibilities;
 3. Establish priorities and mechanisms for selecting, establishing and developing marine protected areas;
 4. Protect species and their critical habitats adequately;
 5. Conserve threatened, rare, endemic and commercial species, threatened, unique, representative and valuable marine habitats, and cultural, archaeological and historical sites;
 6. Ensure permanent protection;
 7. Communicate directly with the regional authorities and centres responsible for co-ordinating the Mediterranean network of protected areas;
 8. Conduct or arrange for research and surveys relevant to planning and management;
 9. Provide mechanisms for developing and implementing management plans for each protected area, based on scientific data;
 10. Control developments, activities and sources of pollution outside the protected areas that may adversely affect them;
 11. Regulate exploitation in protected areas and their adjacent buffer zones;
 12. Control navigation through and mooring in marine protected areas, and
 13. Make regulations and otherwise provide enforcement mechanisms.

Adopt legislation

23. The establishment and management of marine protected areas should be supported by adequate legislation. Comprehensive legislation for sustainable use of large marine areas including both protected areas and other management measures should be considered.
24. The regional development of model legislation for coastal and marine protected areas may be desirable.

Obtain a consensus

25. To be effective, protected areas must have public acceptance and local co-operation in their operation. The establishment of protected areas should thus be subject to wide discussion and if possible consensus among the public, representatives of interested groups, or at least all the government departments concerned.

Provide financial support

26. Adequate financial support or revenues must be made available to the authority to carry out its mandate effectively.

Survey potential sites

27. The site of each potential protected areas should be surveyed in detail, identifying areas with greatest value for different uses.

Establish boundaries

28. The boundaries of coastal and marine protected areas should be ecologically sensible, easily identifiable by the public, and include the waters, the subsoil below and the airspace above the protected area. Adjacent marine, terrestrial and aerial influences and ecological ramifications important to the protected area should be recognized.
29. Where possible and desirable, both land and water areas should be combined and jointly managed in coastal zone protected areas. Offshore marine protected areas should also be considered.
30. Protected areas should allow as many multiple uses as are consistent with conservation objectives.

Identify resources needed

31. The needs for infrastructure, equipment, finance, field personnel (terrestrial and marine) and management support for each protected area should be identified.

Determine protected area status

32. Each protected area should be given a category and status consistent with its conservation and management objectives, based on the standard categories listed in Appendix 2.

Grant legal protection

33. Protected areas should be made permanent by legislation, unless intended as a temporary measure, in accordance with international agreements and guidelines.

Notify RAC/SPA

34. The Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas must be notified of the creation or the modification of protected areas.

Compensate displaced activities

35. Equity should be respected in the creation of protected areas. Users or community groups whose rights or activities are displaced or reduced should be given alternate sources of income or otherwise compensated where practicable.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS

Prepare a management plan

36. A management plan should be prepared for each protected area, and periodically updated in the light of experience. A model outline is given in Appendix 3.

Implement the management plan

37. The management plan should be implemented and the necessary regulations or controls adopted and adequately enforced. Facilities should be built, equipment purchased and personnel hired on a scale consistent with available funds.

Use zoning and buffer zones

38. Zoning should be used whenever appropriate to permit the maximum compatible uses of the protected area. Buffer zones should be created around the protected area to prevent encroachment or degradation (Article 5).

Establish educational programmes

39. Educational opportunities and public interpretation programmes should be developed within protected areas whenever possible.

Monitor the effectiveness of protection

40. Critical species, ecosystems and physical or chemical parameters should be monitored in protected areas to verify the effectiveness of management actions.
41. The RAC/SPA should encourage the development and application of standard regional methods for monitoring protected areas and species.

Conduct research

42. Research under appropriate conditions should be encouraged in protected areas, particularly to define baselines for area and coastal environments, or to develop restoration techniques for natural habitats.

Restore damage

43. Damaged or degraded areas and resources should be restored to their natural or most productive state in accordance with the established objectives of the protected area.

NOTIFICATION OF INFORMATION ON PROTECTED AREAS

Assign responsibility

44. The notification of information on protected areas is the responsibility of the National Focal Point (Article 14.2), which should preferably be the authority responsible for establishing and managing marine protected areas.

Provide information to RAC/SPA

45. Information on each country is to be furnished to the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) in accordance with the standard format in Appendix 4.
46. Information on each protected area is to be furnished regularly to the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas in accordance with the standard format in Appendix 5.
47. Similar information on potential and planned protected areas should also be provided to the RAC/SPA.
48. Information on current and planned research, general surveys, monitoring of the status of species and ecosystems, and other data of regional interest are to be shared with other Parties through the RAC/SPA.
49. Information on the experience acquired, the problems encountered, and the methods developed to resolve them are to be supplied to the RAC/SPA, which can suggest solutions or appropriate studies, and prepare technical and information documents.

Distribute information and regional recommendations

50. In all cases, the RAC/SPA is to make information received widely available to the Parties. It should recommend programmes of co-ordinated research and standard scientific methods for the selection, management and monitoring of protected areas in order to improve the information available on the status of Mediterranean species, ecosystems and cultural resources. In this it should be assisted by an advisory group of experts.

Appendix 1 : Standard classification of Mediterranean marine zones and associated benthic biocenosis (from PERES & PICARD, 1964)

Supralittoral Zone

supralittoral rocks
rapid drying beaches
slowly drying beaches

Midlittoral zone

upper midlittoral rocks
lower midlittoral rocks
-with Lithophyllum tortuosum
-with Ralfsia verrucosa
midlittoral caves
midlittoral detritus
midlittoral sands
muddy sands and muds of lagoons and estuaries

Infralittoral zone

photophilic algae
-with Cystoseira stricta
-with Corallina
infralittoral shingles
coarse sands and fine gravels under wave influence
sands partly protected from wave influence
calm water muddy sands
euryhaline and eurythermal lagoons
terrigenous well-graded fine sands
fine surface sands
Posidonia oceanica beds

coarse sands and fine gravels under influence of bottom currents (various depths)

Circalittoral zone

"Coralligenous" (with shade-loving algae)
semi-dark caves
completely dark caves and tunnels
open sea rocky bottoms
coastal detrital bottoms
-with algaloliths
-with branched coralline algae
-with Lithothamnium
-with Squamariaceae
muddy detrital bottoms
coastal terrigenous muds
open sea detrital bottoms

Bathyal zone

white corals
bathyal muds

Abyssal zone

Appendix 2 : CATEGORIES AND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES OF PROTECTED AREAS

1. **Scientific Reserve/Strict Nature Reserve/Strict Marine Reserve (IUCN I; EEC 1):** To protect nature and maintain natural processes in a undisturbed state in order to have ecologically representative examples of the natural environment available for scientific study, environmental monitoring and education and for the maintenance of genetic resources in a dynamic and evolutionary state.
2. **National Park/Marine National Park (IUCN II; EEC 3):** To protect large natural and scenic areas of national or international significance for scientific, educational and recreational uses.
3. **Natural/Cultural Monument (IUCN III; EEC 6):** To preserve significant natural, cultural or archaeological features because of their special interest or unique characteristics.
4. **Managed Natural Reserve/Wildlife Sanctuary/Marine Sanctuary (IUCN IV; EEC 2):** To assure the natural conditions necessary to protect significant species, groups of species, biotic communities, or physical features of the environment, where these require specific human manipulation for their perpetuation.
5. **Protected Landscape/Seascape (IUCN V; EEC 4):** To maintain significant natural landscapes or coastlines which are characteristic of the harmonious interaction of man, land and sea, while providing opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within the normal life-style and economic activity of these areas .
6. **Resources Reserve (IUCN IV):** To protect the natural resources of the area for future use, and prevent or contain development activities that could affect the resource pending the establishment of objectives which are based upon appropriate knowledge and planning.
7. **Natural Biotic Area/Anthropological Reserve (IUCN VI; EEC 5):** To allow human societies living in harmony with the environment to continue their way of life undisturbed by modern technology.
8. **Multiple Use Management Area/Managed Resource Area/Fisheries Reserve (IUCN VIII):** To provide for the sustained production of fisheries, wildlife, tourism and outdoor recreation, with conservation of nature primarily oriented to the support of the economic activities, or with several zones designated to achieve specific conservation objectives.

There are several titles involving special international recognition of protected areas that may be used in addition to the above:

Biosphere Reserve: Unesco category to conserve for present and future use the diversity and integrity of representative biotic communities of plants and animals within natural ecosystems, and to safeguard the genetic diversity on species of which their continuing evolution depends.

World Heritage Site: site listed under the World Heritage Convention to protect natural or cultural features of World Heritage quality, and to provide information for worldwide public enlightenment.

Biogenetic Reserve: area which is part of Council of Europe network established in order to preserve the biological integrity and ensure the effective conservation of marine or terrestrial habitats, biocenosis or ecosystems.

Appendix 3 : Model Outline for Protected Area Management Plan
(Covering 3 to 5 years)

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction
 - A. Purpose and scope of plan
 - B. Legislative authority for the action
- III. Description
 - A. Regional setting: location and access
 - B. Resources (only facts pertinent to management)
 1. Physical
 2. Biological
 3. Cultural
 - C. Existing uses (description, facilities, economics, etc.)
 1. Recreational
 2. Commercial
 3. Research and education
 4. Traditional
 - D. Existing legal and management framework
 - E. Existing and potential threats and implication for management.
- IV. The Management Plan
 1. Goals and Objectives
 2. Administrative management
 - a. Responsible authority
 - b. Advisory committees
 - c. Agreements (with agencies, organizations, individuals)
 - d. Regional assistance
 3. Physical plan
 - a. Boundaries
 - b. Zoning
 - c. Buffer zone
 - d. New regulations
 4. Resource management
 - a. Scientific research
 - b. Protection of cultural resources
 - c. Management of natural resources
 - d. Pollution control
 - e. Monitoring uses and impacts
 5. User management and enforcement
 - a. Tourism, recreation
 - b. Management of economic activities
 - c. Education, interpretation
 6. Requirements (3- to 5-year plan)
 - a. Staffing
 - b. Training
 - c. Facilities and equipment
 - d. Budget
 7. Revision of management plan
- V. References
- VI. Appendices

Appendix 4 : Country Data Sheet headings

1. Name of country
2. Area (sq km)
3. Length of Mediterranean coastline (km)
4. Area of territorial sea (sq km)
5. Population
6. Legislation
7. Description of protected area administration
8. Address of national authorities
9. Scientific and technical organizations (list and addresses)
10. Experts on marine and coastal subjects (list and addresses)
11. List of established marine and coastal protected areas
12. List of proposed marine and coastal protected areas
13. List of potential marine and coastal protected areas
14. Principal reference material

Appendix 5 : Area Data Sheet headings

1. Official name of area
2. Geographical location
3. Area
 - Total area (hectares)
 - Terrestrial surface (ha)
 - Water surface (ha)
 - Length of coastline (km)
4. Annotated description of the area
5. Legal protection
 - a) Legislation
 - b) Legal status (category)
6. Effective date of establishment
7. Land tenure
 - a) Ownership
 - b) Explanations
8. Human population
9. Physical features
 - I. Terrestrial features
 - a) Geology, topography and hydrology
 - b) Maximum altitude (m)
 - c) Mean temperature (summer and winter) (°C)
 - d) Mean precipitation (summer and winter) (mm)
 - e) Prevalent wind direction and speed (km/h)
 - f) Major seasonal climatic features

- II. Marine environment
 - a) Geology, topography, sedimentology
 - b) Maximum and average depth(m)
 - c) Mean water temperatures (summer and winter) (°C)
 - d) Salinity (summer and winter) (mg/l, o/oo)
 - e) Prevalent currents (summer and winter)
- 10. Vegetation (characteristic, endemic and endangered)
 - a) Terrestrial
 - b) Marine
- 11. Fauna (characteristic, endemic and endangered)
 - a) Terrestrial
 - b) Marine
- 12. Cultural/historical features
- 13. Management
 - a) Management practices
 - b) Staff
 - c) Budget
- 14. Uses
 - a) Recreation/Tourism
 - b) Research
 - c) Education/Training
 - d) Exploitation of resources
- 15. Problems
 - a) Environmental problems
 - b) Management problems
- 16. Principal reference material
- 17. Contact address