

**Nature-based Solution Coalition  
Proposed Contribution  
of the Permanent Mission of the Principality of Monaco**

**Marine educational area**

- Context and rationale:

A marine educational area is a small coastal area, managed in a participatory manner by children of a primary school, under the supervision of their teacher and a scientific referent, who define management objectives and set up actions for this area.

This concept was first created in 2012, in the Marquesas Islands, as a pedagogical, eco-citizen project aiming at enhancing knowledge and protection of the marine environment by a young audience.

This concept was presented at numerous occasions both national, regional and international (i.e. IMPAC3 in 2013, World Parks Congress in 2014, OCEANIA 21 in 2015, National Conference on blue growth in 2015, etc.) creating some interest for its innovative approach.

French Polynesia and the initiating partners have structured the concept to establish a "marine educational area" label (<http://www.aires-marines.fr/content/view/popin/16400>). A pilot network of six marine educational areas was initiated in 2014 in the archipelago.

This kind of projects has an invaluable value in educating children about the protection of the environment and the impact of man on the environment. It easily fits into official educational programs by promoting cross-sectoral activities during the school year.

The project leads to studying the state of marine biodiversity in a clearly defined coastal area, and the pressures that marine species, ecosystems and habitats face both close to the coast and, by extension, in the open Ocean, Awareness raising on unsustainable practice is also a crucial part of the project.

By sensitizing the participating young students inter alia to the impacts of climate change, the project calls upon them to take actions to reduce and mitigate its effects in order to protect marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

This kind of projects thus has a very strong impact on the participating students and this experience will guide their future actions in favor of sustainable development in general (i.e. SDG 14.2 and 14.5), protection of the environment, and of the marine environment in particular, as well as the fight against climate change (SDG 13), as it is clear that climate change and the health of oceans are deeply interconnected.

### Overview of the contribution:

In Monaco, this project was proposed by the Monegasque Association for the Protection of Nature, a non-Governmental entity. The project is entirely dedicated to youth, in a local context, as the selected site for the marine educational area must be located close to the participating school, thus having a strong transformational impact. It was conducted in close partnership with the Princely Government and with the support of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

A 5<sup>th</sup> grade class has been selected by the Ministry of Interior/Department of Education, Youth and Sports to initiate the marine educational area. Once the project was presented to the children by the Monegasque Association for the Protection of Nature, they started to reflect on the choice of the most suitable site. They favored the area which has a diversity of habitats (natural or artificial) and is very diverse (marine and terrestrial biodiversity). The marine educational area is directly located under the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, where educational programs are offered year-round to many schools in the region. A thorough visit of the site allowed them to understand the specificities of the area and to take stock of the situation, which was an important step for the further identification of proposed actions.

#### Calendar of the project held in Monaco:

- 26 November 2018: presentation of the project to the students.
- 6 December 2018: visit on site to learn about the area and the state of the marine environment.
- 16 January 2019: biology workshop in the classroom (on algae from Monaco's coast).
- 7 February: second visit on site to study the marine environment: identification of 35 marine species (fauna and flora) in view of actions to be proposed for the marine education area; observation of human activities in the area.
- 26 February 2019: workshop in the Oceanographic Museum (on corals).
- 7 March: biology workshop in the classroom (study of marine species with microscopes).
- 14 March 2019: third visit on site with an official from the Department of environment (observation of plants and birds).
- 26 March 2019: presentation of the marine educational area by the students, in the Oceanographic Museum, at the occasion of the third "Monaco Ocean Week".

This kind of project can be replicated in any region of the world and many stakeholders can be involved.

This contribution is also linked to the segments of the Climate Action Summit on local action, resilience and youth mobilization.