

**Start date:** 11 June 2019

**Closing date:** 25 June 2019

**Title of the public consultation:** Intent and Objectives: Conservation Objectives and Measures for Malta's Marine Natura 2000 sites

**Ministry:** Ministry for Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change

**Entity:** Environment & Resources Authority

## 1. Background

In terms of Article 51 of the Environment Protection Act (Cap. 549), it is duly notified that the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) is preparing "Conservation Objectives and Measures for Malta's Marine Natura 2000 sites", in line with the [Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations \(S.L. 549.44\)](#) and the [National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan \(NBSAP\)](#) as adopted by the Government of Malta in terms of the same Act.

The process is in line with measures EN2, EN5, EN6 and EN7 of the NBSAP that focus on the establishment of a management approach for Natura 2000 sites, integrating an ecosystem approach under consideration of measures, such as a zoning system within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and/or temporal measures. Such measures are aimed to follow good governance principles with a long-term view and shall include criteria and indicators for assessing and monitoring the effectiveness of such a management approach.

The Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44) also requires the setting up of appropriate conservation measures for protected sites, addressing the habitats and species for which the site was designated.

The main objectives of the proposed "Conservation Objectives and Measures for Malta's Marine Natura 2000 sites" are to:

- establish synergistic management structure for Special Protection Areas (SPAs), coastal and offshore Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance (SACs);
- regulate the main economic activities within coastal Marine Protected Areas;
- strengthen and improve stakeholder involvement and cooperation among entities;
- increase awareness and support education efforts on marine species and habitats;

- create and establish an enforcement structure for coastal MPAs;
- improve knowledge on and monitoring of species;
- increase conservation efforts for selected species;
- ensure long-term stability and function of marine habitats and the overall ecosystem and
- fulfil the obligations under the European Union Nature Directives, namely the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC).

The network of marine protected areas in Malta was created through the European Natura 2000 framework based on the Nature Directives (Habitats and Birds Directive). Such site designations are based on the criteria established through Annex III of the Habitats Directive and the scientific data collected on habitats and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive and Annex I of the Birds Directive. More information regarding these sites is included in the respective Standard Data Forms for each site available from <https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Datasheets-Maps.aspx>

Information on the projects through which scientific data regarding habitats and species has been or is being collated is available at the following links:

- LIFE Migrate Project (LIFE11 NAT/MT/1070): <http://lifeprojectmigrate.com/>
- LIFE BaĦAR for N2K (LIFE12 NAT/MT/000845): <http://lifebahar.org.mt/>
- LIFE+ Malta Seabird Project (LIFE10 NAT/MT/090): <https://maltaseabirdproject.org/>
- EMFF Marine Environmental Monitoring: Towards Effective Management of Malta's Marine Waters (EMFF 8.3.1): <https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/EMFF-MEM-About.aspx>

## 2. Consultation

The public is invited to submit any feedback or comments on the intent and objectives of the "Conservation Objectives and Measures for Malta's Marine Natura 2000 sites".

## 3. Submission of feedback

- **E-mail:** [era.policyconsultation@era.org.mt](mailto:era.policyconsultation@era.org.mt)

## 4. Further notes

The draft "Conservation Objectives and Measures for Malta's Marine Natura 2000 sites" will be available for public consultation in due course at the following web link: <https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Active-Public-Consultations.aspx>

Please be informed that comments submitted, together with the identity of the contributor, may be published online at the end of the public consultation, unless the contributor objects to the publication of his/her personal data. In this case, the contribution may be published in anonymous form.