

# Conservation Objectives & Measures

For Malta's Marine Natura 2000 sites

2021



## List of Abbreviations

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AFM	Armed Forces Malta
ALDFG	Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear
BD	EU Birds Directive, Directive 2009/147/EC
BLM	BirdLIFE Malta
CM	Conservation measure
CO	Conservation objective
CPD	Civil Protection Department
CSD	Continental Shelf Department
DFA	Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
ERA	Environment & Resources Authority
EU	European Union
FAD	Fish aggregation device
FCS	Favourable conservation status
GTA	Gozo Tourism Authority
HD	EU Habitats Directive, Council Directive 92/43/EEC
MECP	Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change and Planning
MP	Monitoring Programme
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MTA	Malta Tourism Authority
N	Year of implementation
N/A	Not applicable
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
nm	Nautical mile
PA	Planning Authority
PAF	Prioritised Action Framework
PoM	Programme of Measures
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
TM	Transport Malta
TBD	To be determined
UoM	University of Malta
VRD	Veterinary and Phytosanitary Regulation Division

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# 1 - Introduction

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## 1.1 - The Habitats and Birds Directives

The **Habitats Directive** (92/43/EEC) and **Birds Directive** (2009/147/EC) seek the protection of the most vulnerable species and habitat types across their natural range within the European Union (EU), with the following overall objectives:

- the Habitats Directive seeks to maintain and restore natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest at a **favourable conservation status (FCS)**;
- the Birds Directive aims to protect **all wild birds** and their most important habitats across the EU.

Designation of sites is required for the protection of species and habitat types listed in Annex I and II to the Habitats Directive and Annex I to the Birds Directive, as well as for migratory birds. This coherent network of protected areas across the European Union is known as the **European Natura 2000 Network**. **Special Conservation Areas (SACs)** designated under the Habitats Directive and **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** designated under the Birds Directive form part of the Natura 2000 network.

## 1.2 - Marine Protected Areas

Malta designated up to 4,138km<sup>2</sup> of marine waters for the conservation of important marine habitats and species listed in Annex I and II to the Habitats Directive and Annex I to the Birds Directive. This area is equivalent to more than 35% of Malta's coastal and marine waters within the 25 nautical mile boundary of the Fisheries Management Zone designated under the Territorial Waters and Contiguous Zone Act (Cap 226).

In total, eighteen (18) Marine Protected Areas have been established in accordance with the **Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44)**, contributing to the achievement of FCS of marine habitats and species, and to the protection of seabirds as listed hereunder:

### **Marine habitats**

Out of the nine (9) marine habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive as "natural habitat types of community interest of which conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)", Malta identified four (4) natural habitat types occurring in Maltese waters:

- *Posidonia* beds (1120);
- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time (1110);
- Reefs (1170); and
- Submerged or partially submerged sea caves (8330).

Five (5) SACs in inshore/coastal waters (Figure 1) and five (5) SACs in offshore waters (Figure 2) are designated for the protection of these four marine habitat types. Three of these sites (MT0000113,

MT0000115 and MT0000116) overlap with SACs for marine mammals, whilst four sites (MT0000105, MT0000113, MT0000115 and MT0000116) overlap with SACs identified for marine reptiles.

The inshore or coastal SACs incorporate all four habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive; while offshore SACs are mainly designated for the purpose of protecting reefs (1170) and sea caves (8330). Designation of protected areas for reefs and sea caves followed the results of the LIFE BaHAR for N2K project (LIFE12 NAT/MT/000845)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Marine Species**

The loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) are listed in Annex II to the Habitats Directive that lists “animal and plants species of community interest of which conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)”. Malta designated one inshore/coastal area and three offshore areas for the protection of the loggerhead turtle (MT0000105, MT0000113, MT0000115 and MT0000116) and three offshore areas (MT0000113, MT0000115 and MT0000116) for the protection of the bottlenose dolphin (Figure 1 & Figure 2). Designation of protected areas for the loggerhead turtle and bottlenose dolphin was based on the results of the Project LIFE+ MIGRATE (LIFE11NAT/MT/1070)<sup>2</sup>. Such protected areas would also contribute to the protection of other dolphin species occurring in Maltese waters, including the common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and the striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*).

In addition, some of the inshore/coastal SACs also contribute to the protection of the Maltese Top-shell (*Steromphala nivosus*) which is listed in Annex II to the Habitats Directive (MT0000101 and MT0000105).

### **Seabirds**

On the basis of the outcome of the LIFE+ Malta Seabird Project (LIFE10 NAT/MT/090 -2011-2016) Malta designated eight Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the protection of breeding seabirds in Malta (Figure 3):

- Yelkouan shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*),
- Scopoli’s shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) and
- European Storm-petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*).

Overlap between SACs and SPAs can be noted in Figure 1 - Figure 3.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://lifebahar.org.mt/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://lifeprojectmigrate.com/>

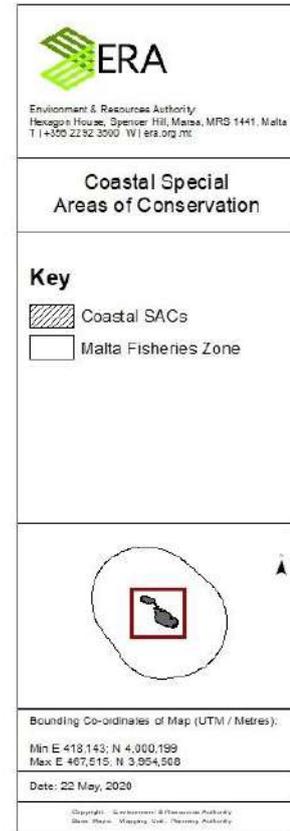
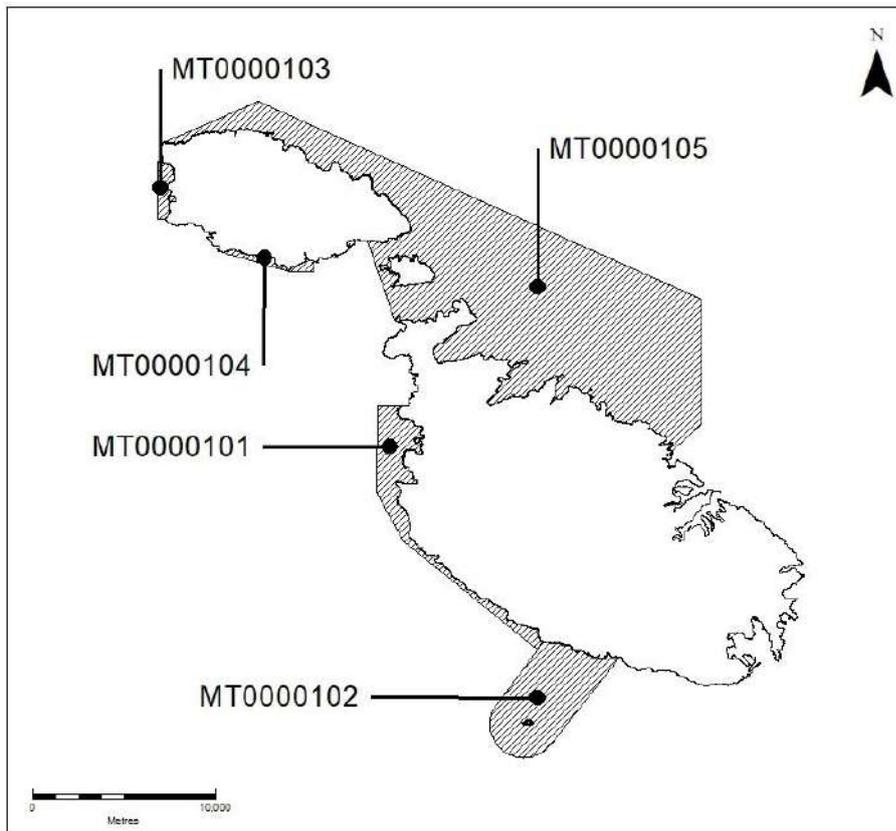


Figure 1: Map of coastal Special Areas of Conservation

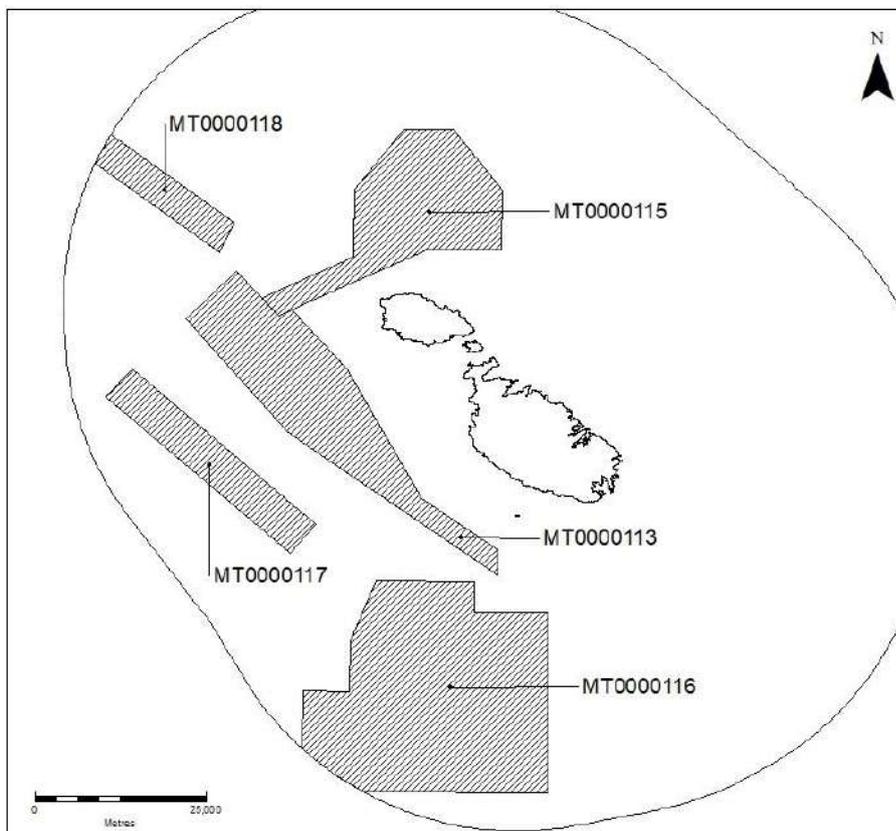


Figure 2: Map of offshore Special Areas of Conservation

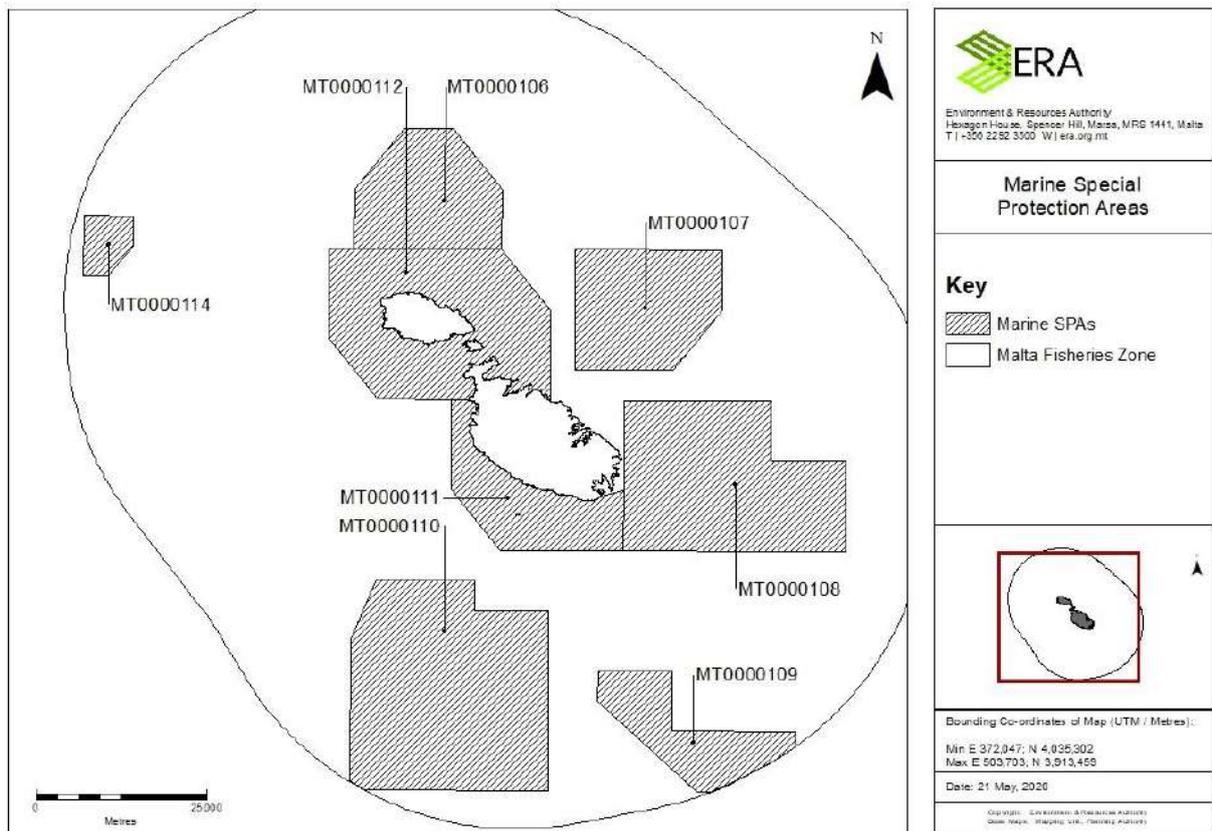


Figure 3: Map of Marine Special Protection Areas

### 1.3 - Management requirements

The designation of protected areas (SACs and SPAs) needs to be coupled to the implementation of management processes targeting the achievement of conservation objectives for the listed habitats and species.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, *“for Special Areas of Conservation, Member States shall establish the **necessary conservation measures** involving if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans and appropriate statutory, administrative or contractual measures **which correspond to the ecological requirements of the natural habitat types in Annex I and the species in Annex II present on the site.**”* Management and assessment requirements as per Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, also apply to Special Protection Areas as designated under the Birds Directive (by virtue of Article 7 of the Habitats Directive).

This means that all Marine Protected Areas should be subject to management regimes targeting the achievement of FCS of marine habitats and species and to the protection of seabirds in accordance with the overall objective of the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive respectively.

## 2 – Scope

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### 2.1 - Conservation Objectives and Conservation Measures

#### **Conservation Objectives**

Management of Marine Protected Areas should be geared at improving or maximising the contribution of the sites to the maintenance or achievement of FCS of the habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive and the protection of seabirds in accordance with the Birds Directive. For this purpose, ‘**conservation objectives**’ need to be set to guide management processes and enable measurement of progress towards achievement of the overall objectives of the two Directives.

A conservation objective is defined as “**the specification of the overall target for the species and/or habitat types for which a site is designated in order for it to contribute to maintaining or reaching favourable conservation status**”. While FCS is defined at **the level of the natural range of the habitat or species**, management related to the contribution of the site to the achievement of such objective needs to be based on **site-specific objectives** that consider the ecological functions of the protected areas.

Broad conservation objectives would thus target achievement of FCS at national, biogeographical or European level, while site-specific objectives would specify the conditions targeted to be achieved by the habitat type or species within the specific sites, so as to maximise the level of contribution of the respective sites in achieving FCS. Site-specific conservation objectives need to:

- be set for all species and habitat types of Community Interest listed in the Habitats Directive and also for species of birds listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive present in Natura 2000 sites;
- be based on the ecological requirements of the natural habitat types and species; and
- address threats of degradation or destruction to which the habitat and species present within the site are exposed to.

Site-specific objectives should be established in the context of the conservation status of the habitat type and species present at the time of designation of the protected area, as specified in the Standard Data Forms (SDF) of such areas<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://era.org.mt/topic/natura-2000-datasheets-maps/>

## **Conservation Measures**

**Conservation measures** are the actions through which the conservation objectives for a Natura 2000 site would be achieved. Such measures should generally be established at the local or site level. However, conservation measures can also be applicable at a broader scale and can include measures to be implemented outside the Natura 2000 network. In fact, compliance with Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive, could require measures that are not site-specific and measures that apply to either areas outside the boundary of the protected site or that apply across multiple sites.

## **2.2 - Current Status and contribution of MPAs to Favourable Conservation Status**

Each site forming part of the Natura 2000 network should be recognised for the contribution of the site to the entire network, so as the Member States can achieve a favourable conservation status for the habitats and species present within the site. This principle should be the basis for establishing site level conservation objectives.

The management process should therefore involve an assessment at the site level of the degree to which the habitat or species concerned requires maintenance of, or, where necessary, restoration to a particular conservation status in order to make sure that the site contributes to achieving conservation targets at a higher level (regional, national, biogeographical region or EU).

In this regard, the conservation status of the listed habitats and species, the status of the protected areas and the associated pressures and threats were taken into consideration prior to developing conservation objectives and measures for the Marine Protected Areas (Table 1 - Table 3). This information was adapted from Malta's reports to the EU Commission pursuant to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive<sup>4</sup>, as well as the Standard Data Forms of each protected area<sup>5</sup>.

The pressures and threats as listed in this document are those ranked as of medium/high significance, thus ensuring the elaboration of objectives and measures targeting habitats/features that are at most risk of not achieving favourable conservation status. However, the assessment of pressures undertaken at a broader scale pursuant to the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC<sup>6</sup> was also taken into consideration. In this regard, pressures that were identified as important at the level of Maltese waters, such as the occurrence of non-indigenous species, were also taken into consideration when setting conservation objectives and measures.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/mt/eu/art17/envxngv\\_g/](http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/mt/eu/art17/envxngv_g/)

<sup>5</sup> <https://era.org.mt/topic/natura-2000-datasheets-maps/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MSFD-Art.-17-Update-Malta\\_FINAL.pdf](https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MSFD-Art.-17-Update-Malta_FINAL.pdf)

**Table 1: Conservation status of the marine habitats, the pressures and threats and the status of the relevant protected areas**

<b>Annex I Habitat</b>	<b>Conservation Status</b>	<b>Pressures &amp; Threats</b>	<b>Marine Protected Area</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b><i>Posidonia</i> beds</b>	Favourable	Energy production and transmission activities generating light, heat or other forms pollution	<b>MT0000101</b>	Good conservation
		Sports, tourism and leisure activities	<b>MT0000102</b>	Excellent conservation
		Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) activities causing physical loss and disturbance of seafloor habitats	<b>MT0000103</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000104</b>	Average or reduced conservation
			<b>MT0000105</b>	Excellent conservation
<b>Sandbanks</b>	Favourable	Sports, tourism and leisure activities	<b>MT0000101</b>	Excellent conservation
			<b>MT0000104</b>	Average or reduced conservation
<b>Reefs</b>	Favourable	Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) activities causing physical loss and disturbance of seafloor habitats	<b>MT0000101</b>	Good conservation
		Sports, tourism and leisure activities	<b>MT0000102</b>	Good conservation
		Industrial or commercial activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	<b>MT0000103</b>	Good conservation
		Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species	<b>MT0000104</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000105</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000113</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000115</b>	Good conservation

			<b>MT0000116</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000117</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000118</b>	Good conservation
<b>Submerged or partially submerged sea caves</b>	Favourable	Sports, tourism and leisure activities	<b>MT0000101</b>	Good conservation
		Residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	<b>MT0000103</b>	/
		Other natural catastrophes	<b>MT0000104</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000105</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000113</b>	Good conservation
			<b>MT0000115</b>	Good conservation
<b>MT0000118</b>	Good conservation			

**Table 2: Conservation Status of the relevant species as reported by Malta for the purpose of Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and the relevant pressures and threats for such species.**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Conservation Status</b>	<b>Pressures &amp; Threats</b>	<b>Marine Protected Area</b>	<b>Status</b>
<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	Favourable	Residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	<b>MT0000113</b>	Good conservation
		Industrial or commercial activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	<b>MT0000115</b>	Good conservation
		Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey	<b>MT0000116</b>	Good conservation

		populations and disturbance of species		
		Shipping lanes and ferry lanes transport operations		
		Mixed source excess energy		
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	Unknown	Residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	N/A	N/A
		Industrial or commercial activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)		
		Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species		
		Shipping lanes and ferry lanes transport operations		
		Mixed source excess energy		
<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	Unknown	Residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	N/A	N/A
		Industrial or commercial activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)		
		Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species		
		Shipping lanes and ferry lanes transport operations		
		Mixed source excess energy		

<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Favourable	Sports, tourism and leisure activities	<b>MT0000105</b>	Good conservation
		Residential or recreational activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	<b>MT0000113</b>	Good conservation
		Industrial or commercial activities and structures generating marine macro- and micro- particulate pollution (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam)	<b>MT0000115</b>	Good conservation
		Bycatch and incidental killing (due to fishing and hunting activities)	<b>MT0000116</b>	Good conservation
		Change of habitat location, size, and / or quality due to climate change		
<i>Steromphala nivos</i>	Favourable	Transmission of electricity and communications (cables)	<b>MT0000101</b>	Good conservation
		Shipping lanes, ferry lanes and anchorage infrastructure (e.g. canalisation, dredging)	<b>MT0000105</b>	Good conservation
		Creation or development of sports, tourism and leisure infrastructure (outside the urban or recreational areas)		
		Pollution to surface or ground water due to urban run-offs		
		Illegal harvesting, collecting and taking		
<i>Pinna nobilis</i>	Unfavourable	Shipping lanes, ferry lanes and anchorage infrastructure (e.g. canalisation, dredging)	N/A	N/A
		Conversion from other land uses to commercial / industrial areas (excluding drainage and modification of coastline, estuary and coastal conditions)		
		Sports, tourism and leisure activities		
		Plant and animal diseases, pathogens and pests		

**Table 3: Threats and Pressures of relevance to each Marine Protected Area (including Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas).**

<b>Natura 2000 Site</b>	<b>Threats &amp; Pressures</b>
MT0000101	Professional and passive fishing
	Leisure fishing
MT0000102	Professional passive fishing
	Leisure fishing
MT0000103	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
	Leisure fishing
	Professional passive fishing
MT0000104	Leisure fishing
	Professional passive fishing
MT0000105	Professional active fishing
	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
	Professional passive fishing
	Marine macro-pollution (i.e. plastic bags, styrofoam)
	Leisure fishing
MT0000106	Professional passive fishing
	Marine macro-pollution (i.e. plastic bags, styrofoam)
	Leisure fishing
MT0000107	N/A
MT0000108	N/A
MT0000109	N/A
MT0000110	Professional passive fishing
	Marine macro-pollution (i.e. plastic bags, styrofoam)
	Leisure fishing
MT0000111	Noise nuisance, noise pollution
	Light pollution
MT0000112	Shipping lanes
	Other sport / leisure complexes
	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
MT0000113	Leisure fishing
	Professional passive fishing
MT0000114	N/A
MT0000115	Professional active fishing
MT0000116	Professional active fishing
MT0000117	N/A
MT0000118	N/A

## 2.3 - Scope and objectives of this document

This document puts forward conservation objectives and conservation measures for Marine Protected Areas in accordance with Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive.

The objectives and measures presented in this document are based on previous drafts, which were subject to stakeholder consultations, and have been revised in line with the guidelines of the EU Commission in terms of level of detail<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, results of the stakeholder consultations were taken into account throughout the development of the proposed conservation measures.

Conservation objectives are being proposed at different geographical scale as listed and defined hereunder. Conservation measures are put forward with a view to achieve the set objectives.

- **Regional Objectives (RO):** broad conservation targets defined at a regional scale to ensure the contribution of the Natura 2000 network to the overall goal of achieving a favourable conservation status of species and habitats of Community interest.
- **National Objectives (NO):** conservation targets to be achieved at a national level, thus securing the contribution of all Marine Protected Areas to the overall goal of achieving a favourable conservation status of species and habitats of Community interest; and
- **Site-specific objectives (SSO):** objectives to be met in a site in order to make sure that the site contributes in the best possible way to achieving FCS at the appropriate level. Site level conservation objectives define the desired condition or state of the species and habitat types present on the site.

Section 3 of this document puts forward a set of **General Objectives and Measures** for the overall conservation of marine sites. Such general objectives and measures are not related to specific habitat types or species, but are considered necessary for the overall contribution of Marine Protected Areas to the achievement of favourable conservation status of listed habitats and species. This section also includes supporting measures, which are deemed necessary when current knowledge or information in relation to the existing conditions in the site, on the species/habitats status or on the main pressures and threats that can affect them was not available does not enable elaboration of targeted conservation objectives and measures.

Section 4 details **Specific Objectives and Measures** focusing on protected features. It is important to notice that not every feature has (or requires) site-specific measures. However, for every site a set of site-specific measures are being put forward. In some cases, implementation of the specific measures in Section 4 would contribute to the achievement of the general objectives and measures. As an example, awareness campaigns on specific habitats or features, would contribute to the achievement of awareness events and an overall increase in public awareness targeted in the general section.

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to the following links:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/commission\\_note/commission\\_note2\\_EN.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/commission_note/commission_note2_EN.pdf) and [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/commission\\_note/comNote%20conservation%20measures\\_EN.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/commission_note/comNote%20conservation%20measures_EN.pdf).

## 2.4 - Synergies across policy implementation

The elaboration of conservation objectives and conservation measures was primarily undertaken in relation to the conservation status of the listed habitats and species. Nevertheless, achievement of common goals across related policies was an important consideration throughout the whole process. In this regard, the elaboration of conservation objectives and measures for Marine Protected Areas also sought a streamlined approach towards implementation of related EU and regional policy, including *inter alia*:

- the **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)** targeting the achievement of global and EU targets on biodiversity;
- the implementation of the **EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD - 2008/56/EC)**, in particular the Programme of Measures pursuant to this Directive;
- the **Barcelona Convention** for the protection of the marine environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and associated protocols and action plans.

The MSFD Good Environmental Status (GES) characteristics and environmental targets, which for listed habitat types and species groups may equate to conservation targets at a National scale, were updated in 2019 pursuant to Article 17 of the MSFD<sup>8</sup>. The GES characteristics in particular adopted existing thresholds or standards set by regional and EU policy to the extent possible, including those set by the Habitats Directive for the determination of conservation status. Within this context, the MSFD GES was particularly considered when elaborating National conservation objectives, also to ensure synergies between the two processes and achievement of common goals.

## 2.5 - Implementation Process

As specified in the EU Commission guidelines, the conservation measures outlined in this document are accompanied by an indication of the responsible entity and a timeline for implementation. However, a more detailed working plan for implementation of the measures will be developed once all measures are finalised and adopted. Such a working plan will lay out a comprehensive step-by-step approach for the implementation of conservation measures in a logical sequence and will provide information on the involvement of different entities, budgetary requirements and other details.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MSFD-Art.-17-Update-Malta\\_FINAL.pdf](https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MSFD-Art.-17-Update-Malta_FINAL.pdf)

## 3 - General objectives and measures

### 3.1 - Education and awareness (EA)

#### Regional Objective:

- **RO1:** Engage and follow regional awareness campaigns and collaborate on regional projects with an awareness/education component.

#### National Objective:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.

Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_EA1	RO1 NO1	Develop and implement a strategy to achieve the targeted increase in public awareness.	ERA	N – N+8	National	All
CM_EA2	NO1	Support and/or organise at least 2 awareness events per year <sup>9</sup> to raise awareness on marine species, habitats as well as pressures/threats.	ERA / local NGOs	N+8	National	All
CM_EA3	RO1	Participate in 2 regional level projects focused on marine related topics with an education/	ERA / UoM, NGOs	N+8	Regional	N/A

<sup>9</sup> Inclusive of the awareness raising campaigns specified for specific habitats/features.

Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		awareness and training component.				
<b>CM_EA4</b>	<b>NO1</b>	Conduct at least 3 surveys (e.g. online) to define the baseline and assess progress achieved towards an increase in awareness.	<b>ERA</b>	N – N+8	National	N/A

### 3.2 - Stakeholder involvement (SI)

#### Regional Objective:

- **RO2:** Improve stakeholder involvement and knowledge exchange across the biogeographical region based on best available data and practices.

#### National Objective:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.

Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_SI1	RO2 NO2 NO3	Set up at least 1 steering committee aimed at the involvement of stakeholders throughout the management process.	ERA / relevant stakeholders	N+3	National/ Site Specific	All
CM_SI2	NO1 NO2	Create and initiate at least 1 Citizen Science program for data collection to promote citizen engagement.	ERA / NGOs, UoM	N+3	National	All
CM_SI3	NO1 NO2	Involvement of at least 5% of selected economic users in scientific assessments and/or citizen science data collections processes.	ERA, DFA/ relevant stakeholders including divers & fishers	N-N+8	National	All
CM_SI4	RO2	Develop and promote eco-label for local sustainable fish.	ERA, DFA / relevant stakeholders	N+3	National	All

### 3.4 - Pressures and threats (PT)

#### Regional Objective:

- **RO3:** Collaborate in regional research efforts on pressures and threats, as well as vulnerable habitats and species, e.g. coralligenous/maërl, seabirds, cetaceans and elasmobranchs.

#### National Objectives:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.

#### Site-specific Objectives:

- **SSO1:** Reduction of the occurrence of illegal anthropogenic activity or breaches to existing regulations in at least 60% of coastal MPAs.

Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_PT1	NO1 NO2 NO4	Facilitate/support at least 3 annual marine clean-ups within MPAs.	ERA / NGOs, WasteServ, MTA, MECP and relevant stakeholders	N – N+8	National / Site Specific	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_PT2	NO4 SSO1	In coordination with the relevant competent entities, develop and implement a strategy to enhance compliance.	All relevant competent authorities including ERA, TM, DFA, AFM, CPD, Police Force Malta / NGOs,	N+1 – N+8	National	MT0000101- MT0000105 MT0000111 MT0000112

Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
			divers, fishers			
<b>CM_PT3</b>	<b>NO3 NO4</b>	Develop, inform and publicise a set of Code of Conducts/ Guidelines for touristic and recreational activities, including diving, boat tours, and boat parties, addressing physical disturbance or other forms of disturbance on the marine environment and associated species.	<b>ERA / MTA, GTA, TM</b>	N+2	National/ Site Specific	MT0000101- MT0000105 MT0000111 MT0000112
<b>CM_PT4</b>	<b>NO1 NO3 NO4</b>	Develop and promote a list of edible invasive alien species that have the potential to be commercialised through diversification of fishers' catch.	<b>ERA, DFA</b>	N+3	National	All
<b>CM_PT5</b>	<b>NO1 NO2 NO4</b>	Establish working relationship with fishers to monitor and target introduced non-indigenous species and promote their consumption.	<b>ERA, DFA/ Fishers</b>	N+3 – N+6	National	All

### 3.5 - Improved data collection (IDC)

#### Regional Objective:

- **RO3:** Collaborate in regional research efforts on pressures and threats, as well as vulnerable habitats and species, e.g. coralligenous/maërl, seabirds, cetaceans and elasmobranchs.

#### National Objectives:

- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO5:** Ensure availability of centralised information/data on marine species/habitats and pressures and threats thereon.
- **NO6:** Address priority knowledge gaps on vulnerable species and species important for the ecological functioning of key marine habitats and ecosystems.

#### Site Specific Objectives:

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.

General Supporting Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_IDC1	NO5	Review the structure of existing database/s for the marine environment to ensure accommodation, centralisation and continuous updating of all relevant data and information on each MPA.	ERA	N+2	National	All
CM_IDC2	NO3 NO5	Monitor and track the use of the database on a regular basis and promote sharing of data/information across stakeholders through the	ERA	N+2 – N+8	National	All

General Supporting Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		updated database once a year.				
<b>CM_IDC3</b>	<b>RO3 NO6</b>	Undertake studies to select key habitats and species that support the functioning of coastal and marine ecosystems, for which knowledge is limited, and development of related indicators for assessment.	<b>ERA / UoM, NGOs</b>	N+1 – N+5	National/ Regional	All
<b>CM_IDC4</b>	<b>NO3 SSO2</b>	Mapping of existing pressures in Marine Protected Areas.	<b>ERA</b>	N+3	National	All

## 3.6 - Management (M)

### **Regional objective:**

- **RO4:** To collaborate with national and international experts/advisors on MPA management.

### **National objectives:**

- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO6:** Address priority knowledge gaps on vulnerable species and species important for the ecological functioning of key marine habitats and ecosystems.
- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO8:** The abundance and/or composition of selected marine species or species groups are indicative of good status of marine ecosystems and/or sustainable exploitation.
- **NO9:** Increase fish abundance by 5% within at least one coastal site within 10 years through reduction of fishing pressure.
- **NO10:** Increase coherence in management processes across all MPAs.

### **Site-specific Objectives:**

- **SSO1:** Reduction of the occurrence of illegal anthropogenic activity or breaches to existing regulations in at least 60% of coastal MPAs.
- **SSO3:** Reduce high impact activities on sensitive habitats and species within at least 10% of MPAs.

Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_M1	NO10 SSO3	Set up relevant site management team/s.	ERA	N+3	National/ Site Specific	TBD
CM_M2	NO3 NO4 NO10 SSO1 SSO3	Create and publish a zonation plan for MPAs, restricting high impact activities in selected areas.	ERA / PA	N+7 – N+8	National	All
CM_M3	NO3 NO4 SSO1	Develop and publish site regulations of relevant anthropogenic activities within MPAs to inform public and stakeholders.	ERA	N+2	National/ Site Specific	All
CM_M4	NO6 NO8	Develop at least 2 Action Plans for selected marine species that are in line with regional action plans for respective marine species groups/habitats (if existent).	ERA	N+7	National	All
CM_M5	NO2 NO4 NO8 NO9	Identify and establish, in consultation with the fisheries sector a minimum of one pilot 'Fish Revival Area' <sup>10</sup> and areas with gear restrictions or temporary closures	ERA, DFA / fishers	N+1 – N+2	National/ Site Specific	MT0000101 MT0000102 MT0000103 MT0000104 MT0000105

<sup>10</sup> The term 'Fish Revival Area' refers to an area where fisheries activity is managed, also through zonation, for the purpose of restoring fish communities as part of wider ecosystems.

Conservation Measures						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		covering more than 50 ha to address fishing pressure.				
<b>CM_M6</b>	<b>NO8</b>	Conduct at least 2 fish stock assessments within Fish Revival Areas <sup>8</sup> and reference zones to assess effectiveness of closure to fishing pressure.	<b>ERA / DFA</b> relevant experts	N+2 – N+6	National/ Site Specific	MT0000101 MT0000102 MT0000103 MT0000104 MT0000105
<b>CM_M7</b>	<b>RO4</b> <b>NO7</b> <b>NO10</b>	Establish an impartial Scientific Advisory body to evaluate marine data and monitoring approaches.	<b>ERA / DFA,</b> relevant experts	N+3	National/ Regional	All
<b>CM_M8</b>	<b>NO2</b> <b>NO9</b> <b>NO10</b>	Establish a Committee composed of the representatives of the relevant competent authorities, relevant experts and representatives of the local fishing community so as to propose conservation/ management measures for Fish Revival Areas.	<b>ERA, DFA /</b> fisheries sector	N+3	National	MT0000101 MT0000102 MT0000103 MT0000104 MT0000105

## 4 - Specific objectives and measures

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## 4.1 - Cetaceans (Ce)

### Regional objectives:

- **RO5:** Update and share knowledge on regional developments relevant to cetacean conservation.
- **RO6:** To contribute to conservation efforts that aim to ensure that populations of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea do not experience significant population declines.

### National objectives:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO5:** Ensure availability of centralised information/data on marine species/habitats and pressures and threats thereon.
- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO11:** The distribution and population abundance of marine mammals is stable and not declining taking into consideration natural variation.

### Site – specific objectives:

#### **MT0000101-MT0000105, MT0000113, MT0000115-MT0000118<sup>11</sup>:**

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.
- **SSO3:** Reduce high impact activities on sensitive habitats and species within at least 10% of MPAs.
- **SSO4:** Reduce disturbance on marine mammals from relevant anthropogenic activities, including noise-generating activities, within the protected sites.

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<sup>11</sup> All Special Areas of Conservation are included here noting that all three species of dolphins are being targeted for conservation purposes.

**MT0000113, MT0000115 and MT0000116:**

- **SSO5:** Acquire more knowledge regarding the ecological functions of the sites for *Tursiops truncatus*, *Delphinus delphis* and *Stenella coeruleoalba*.
- **SSO6:** Number of sightings from systematic visual surveys of *Tursiops truncatus*, *Delphinus delphis* and *Stenella coeruleoalba* within the MPAs is stable throughout the implementation cycle.

Conservation Measures for Cetaceans						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Ce1	RO5 RO6 NO7 NO11 SSO2	Review existing protocol addressing cetacean strandings to enable a stronger relationship with relevant entities and improve knowledge on causes of mortality/injury.	ERA / Nature Trust, AFM, UoM, VRD	N+2	National	All
CM_Ce2	NO1 NO4 NO11 SSO6	Raise awareness on impacts of marine litter on cetaceans through at least 1 awareness event a year.	ERA	N – N+8	National	All
CM_Ce3	NO4 NO11 SSO3 SSO4 SSO6	Continue the implementation of assessments on issues linked with underwater noise.	ERA	Ongoing	National	All
CM_Ce4	NO3 NO4 NO11 SSO3 SSO4 SSO6	Develop a Code of Conduct, targeting protection of these species from human interference.	ERA/relevant stakeholders	N+2	National	All

Supporting Conservation Measures for Cetaceans						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Ce5	RO5 NO1 NO2 NO3 NO5	Improve data collection and recording on (i) any cetacean by-catch through participatory workshops for fishers and (ii) on cetacean sightings, through citizen science where the general public will be involved in data recording.	DFA, ERA / AFM, NGOs, UoM	N+2	National	All
CM_Ce6	RO5 NO7 SSO5	Conduct sighting surveys to assess population status and targeted surveys to determine the ecological functions of MPAs.	ERA	NN+8	National/ Site Specific	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000116

## 4.2 - Marine turtles (Tu)

### Regional objectives:

- **RO7:** Update and share knowledge on regional developments relevant to marine turtle conservation.
- **RO8:** To contribute to conservation efforts that aim to ensure that populations of *Caretta caretta* in the Mediterranean Sea do not experience significant population declines.

### National objectives:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO5:** Ensure availability of centralised information/data on marine species/habitats and pressures and threats thereon.
- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO12:** The distribution and population abundance of marine turtles is stable and not declining taking into consideration natural variation.
- **NO13:** Improve knowledge on interactions of turtles with fisheries activity, bycatch, plastic ingestion and other relevant threats within the FMZ.
- **NO14:** The number of incidentally-caught turtles, as verified through official data collection processes and analysis of stranded specimens, shows a declining trend.
- **NO15:** Achieve a 40% increase in fishers, who are informed on the procedures of reporting injured/caught turtles to the relevant authority.

### Site – specific objectives:

#### **MT0000101-MT0000105, MT0000113, MT0000115-MT0000118:**

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.
- **SSO3:** Reduce high impact activities on sensitive habitats and species within at least 10% of MPAs.

- **SSO7:** Incidental by-catch of marine turtles within MPAs is at levels that are not harmful to the turtle populations.
- **SSO8:** Engage public and relevant stakeholders in data collection on *Caretta caretta* and relevant pressures/threats.

**MT0000105, MT0000113, MT0000115 and MT0000116:**

- **SSO9:** Acquire more knowledge regarding ecological functions of the sites for *Caretta caretta*.
- **SSO10:** Number of sightings from systematic visual surveys of *Caretta caretta* within the MPAs is stable throughout the implementation cycle.

Conservation Measures for Turtles						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Tu1	RO8 NO2 NO7 NO13 NO15 SSO2	Review existing protocol addressing stranded/injured turtles and their rehabilitation to enable a stronger relationship with relevant entities and improve knowledge on causes of mortality/injury.	ERA / Nature Trust, VRD	N+2	National	All
CM_Tu2	NO1 NO4 NO12 SSO10	Raise awareness on impacts of marine litter on turtles through at least 1 awareness event a year.	ERA	N – N+9	National	All
CM_Tu3	NO3 NO4 NO12 NO13 NO14 SSO3 SSO7 SSO10	Develop mitigation measures to reduce by-catch and promote their application on-site.	ERA, DFA / Stakeholders	N+2	National	All

Supporting Conservation Measures for Turtles						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Tu4	<b>RO7</b> <b>RO8</b> <b>NO2</b> <b>NO3</b> <b>NO5</b> <b>NO7</b> <b>NO13</b> <b>NO14</b> <b>NO15</b> <b>SSO2</b> <b>SSO8</b>	Improve data recording on stranded/captured turtle (incl. by-catch) on size, weight, threat to which it has been exposed and rehabilitation progress (if alive) mainly through updated protocols, centralised data recording, participatory workshops with fishers and citizen science.	<b>ERA/ DFA,</b> <b>NGOs</b>	N+2	National	All
CM_Tu5	<b>RO7</b> <b>RO8</b> <b>NO7</b> <b>NO12</b> <b>SSO9</b>	Conduct sighting surveys to assess population status and targeted surveys to determine the ecological functions of MPAs.	<b>ERA</b>	N+1 – N+6	National/ Site Specific	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000116

### 4.3 - Seabirds (Sb)

#### **Regional objectives:**

- **RO9:** Share knowledge on regional developments relevant to seabird conservation.
- **RO10:** To contribute to conservation efforts that aim to ensure that populations of *Puffinus yelkouan*, *Calonectris diomedea* and *Hydrobates pelagicus* do not experience significant population declines.

#### **National objectives:**

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO5:** Ensure availability of centralised information/data on marine species/habitats and pressures and threats thereon.
- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO16:** Reduce the impact of known pressures and threats to seabird colonies.

#### **Site – specific objectives:**

**MT0000106, MT0000107, MT0000108, MT0000109, MT0000110, MT0000111, MT0000112, MT0000114:**

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.
- **SSO3:** Reduce high impact activities on sensitive habitats and species within at least 10% of MPAs.
- **SSO11:** The proportion of breeding seabird population and distribution, that is subject to disturbance as a result of light pollution and other anthropogenic activities is reduced.
- **SSO12:** Engage public and relevant stakeholders in data collection on seabirds and relevant pressures/threats.
- **SSO13:** Acquire more knowledge regarding ecological functions of the sites for *Puffinus yelkouan*, *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis* and *Calonectris diomedea*.

**MT0000111 & MT0000112:**

- **SSO1:** Reduction of the occurrence of illegal anthropogenic activity or breaches to existing regulations in at least 60% of coastal MPAs.
- **SSO14:** Assess and regulate the level of physical, sound and light disturbance of seabirds in their functional habitat areas.

Conservation Measures for Seabirds						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Sb1	RO9 RO10 NO1 NO2 NO7 SSO2	Improve data collection and recording on seabirds through citizen science, where the general public will be involved in data recording.	ERA/NGOs, WBRU	N+4	national/ site specific	All marine SPAs
CM_Sb2	RO9 RO10 NO4 NO16 SSO3 SSO11	Develop guidance documents in liaison with relevant stakeholders targeting pressures on seabirds.	ERA/WBRU, NGOs	N+3	national/ site specific	All marine SPAs
CM_Sb3	RO10 NO4 NO16 SSO2 SSO3 SSO11 SSO14	Assess existing and, if necessary, extend or create, noise and light restriction zones within coastal locations for the protection of seabird colonies, and adopt as relevant Green Public Procurement considerations and guidelines on light pollution.	ERA, TM/ NGOs, IM	N+5	Site Specific	MT0000111 MT0000112
CM_Sb4	RO9 NO2 NO3 NO5	Improve data recording on seabird by-catch through updated	ERA, DFA/ fisheries sector	N+2	national	All marine SPAs

Conservation Measures for Seabirds						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
	<b>NO7</b> <b>SSO2</b> <b>SSO12</b>	protocols, centralised data recording and participatory workshops for fisheries sector.				
<b>CM_Sb5</b>	<b>RO10</b> <b>NO4</b> <b>NO16</b> <b>SSO1</b> <b>SSO3</b> <b>SSO11</b> <b>SSO12</b> <b>SSO14</b>	Install a set of surveillance cameras within nesting/breeding sites to support enforcement/moni toring of regulation compliance.	<b>ERA/NGOs,</b> <b>TM</b>	<b>N+2 –</b> <b>N+3</b>	<b>National/ Site Specific</b>	<b>MT0000111</b> <b>MT0000112</b>

Supporting Conservation Measures for Seabirds						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
<b>CM_Sb6</b>	<b>RO9</b> <b>NO7</b> <b>SSO13</b>	Conduct surveys contributing to assessment of population status and determination of ecological functions of MPAs.	<b>ERA, WBRU/ NGOs</b>	<b>N+1 –</b> <b>N+8</b>	<b>National/ Site Specific</b>	<b>All marine SPAs</b>

#### 4.4 - The Maltese Top-shell (*Steromphala nivosa*) (Sn)

##### National objectives:

- **NO17:** Protect natural development opportunities for habitats important for *S. nivosa*.
- **NO18:** The distribution and population abundance of *S. nivosa* is stable and not declining, taking into consideration natural variation.
- **NO19:** Ensure that the condition and quality of the habitat used by *S. nivosa* is maintained in good status.

##### Site – specific objectives:

##### **MT0000101 & MT0000105**

- **SSO15:** To improve knowledge on the ecological requirements and habitat quality within the identified sites.

Conservation Measures for <i>Steromphala nivosa</i>						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Sn1	<b>NO17 NO18 NO19</b>	Develop conservation measures on the basis of information gathered from commissioned studies to address the susceptibility of <i>S.nivosa</i> to pressures.	ERA/ relevant experts	N+3	Site Specific	MT0000101 MT0000105
CM_Sn2	<b>NO18</b>	Explore the possibility of reintroduction of <i>S. nivosa</i> to attempt to re-establish populations in suitable habitat locations previously known to host the species.	ERA/ relevant experts	N+8	Site Specific	MT0000101 MT0000105

Supporting Conservation Measures for <i>Steromphala nivosa</i>						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Sn3	SSO15	Undertake a population genetic study on local populations of <i>S. nivosa</i> to assess the extent of connectivity between them.	ERA/ relevant expert	N+8	Site Specific	MT0000101 MT0000105

#### 4.5 - Sandbanks (Habitat 1110) (Sa)

##### National objectives:

- **NO20:** Maintain favourable conservation status of sandbanks and support the increase of associated species.

*Site-specific measures for sandbanks are not considered feasible. National level is sufficient.*

Conservation Measures for Sandbanks
No specific measures for Sandbanks required, as biodiversity within does not differ from surrounding area, so protection is established through general CMs.

#### 4.6 - *Posidonia oceanica* beds (Habitat 1120) (Po)

##### Regional objectives:

- **RO11:** To contribute to cooperate with neighbouring countries in tackling biological invasions via exchange of information through established portals.
- **RO12:** To contribute to exchange of information on management approaches with other MPA managers in the region at least every 2 years.

##### National objectives:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.

- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO5:** Ensure availability of centralised information/data on marine species/habitats and pressures and threats thereon.
- **NO6:** Address priority knowledge gaps on vulnerable species and species important for the ecological functioning of key marine habitats and ecosystems.
- **NO8:** The abundance and/or composition of selected marine species or species groups are indicative of good status of marine ecosystems and/or sustainable exploitation.
- **NO21:** Ensure that if evidence of *Posidonia oceanica* habitat deterioration is present, counter measures are taken.
- **NO22:** Improve knowledge on the status of species considered typical of this habitat type, including the Noble Pen Shell *Pinna nobilis* and seahorses *Hippocampus* spp., and their ecological requirements.

**Site - specific objectives:**

**MT0000101 – MT0000105:**

- **SSO1:** Reduction of the occurrence of illegal anthropogenic activity or breaches to existing regulations in at least 60% of coastal MPAs.
- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.
- **SSO3:** Reduce high impact activities on sensitive habitats and species within at least 10% of MPAs.
- **SSO16:** Improve knowledge on the extent and intensity of pressures on *P. oceanica* within MPAs.
- **SSO17:** Increase public awareness about the importance of *P. oceanica* on site.
- **SSO18:** Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of relevant introduced non-indigenous species within the protected sites.
- **SSO19:** The structure and functions of *P. oceanica* meadows are in high/good status on the basis of biotic indices used under Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC for more than 75% of the area covered by the habitat within the MPA.
- **SSO20:** *P. oceanica* habitat loss within MPAs is reduced to a minimum thus ensuring a stable coverage of *P. oceanica* within the protected sites through time.
- **SSO21:** Physico-chemical conditions of the water column in MPAs are not indicative of eutrophic conditions and are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climate conditions (or typical nutrient and salinity conditions in the Mediterranean region).

**MT0000101, MT0000103 and MT0000105 (primarily):**

- **SSO22:** Assess site for suitability for restoration measures for *P. oceanica* meadows.

**MT0000104, MT0000105:**

- **SSO23:** Achieve a stable population of *Hippocampus* species (seahorses) within these sites.

Conservation Measures for <i>Posidonia</i> beds						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Po1	NO1 NO3 NO4 NO8 SSO1 SSO3 SSO17 SSO19	Develop codes of good practice on how people can support and protect <i>P. oceanica</i> beds and associated species.	ERA	N+3	National	MT0000101 MT0000105
CM_Po2	NO1 NO3 SSO17 SSO19	Install at least two beach signs to inform the public about regulations and importance of <i>P. oceanica</i> and associated species.	ERA	N+3	Site Specific	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Po3	NO4 NO21 SSO3 SSO16 SSO19 SSO20	Studies incorporated within the ongoing Life Integrated project <sup>12</sup> will examine anchoring and mooring pressures.	ERA/ relevant entities	N+3	Site Specific	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Po4	NO21 SSO19 SSO20 SSO22	Identify at least 3 potential sites for habitat restoration attempts for <i>P. oceanica</i> .	ERA/UoM, DFA, Fisheries sector	N+3	Site Specific	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Po5	RO12 NO21 SSO19 SSO20 SSO22	Conduct a pilot study to investigate the restoration of the density (“filling gaps”) of	ERA/ external assistance	N+6	Site Specific	MT0000101- MT0000105

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.rbmplife.org.mt/content/anchoring-and-mooring-surveys>

Conservation Measures for <i>Posidonia</i> beds						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		the meadows within an area of at least 50 ha.				
CM_Po6	RO11 RO12 NO4 NO21 SSO18 SSO19	Adopt an early warning and rapid response system (EWRR) that ensures timely detection of introduced non-indigenous species via a robust and coordinated national surveillance system and, implementation of appropriate responses without delay.	ERA/ experts	N – N+8	Site Specific	MT0000101 - MT0000105
CM_Po7	NO4, SSO3 SSO19 SSO21	Ensure good water quality within MPAs through regulation of discharges by existing environmental permitting procedures and monitoring any potential impacts of brine discharges on <i>P. oceanica</i> .	ERA	On- going	National	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Po8	NO6 NO22	Investigate and map potential refuge areas for the noble pen	ERA/ experts	N+1	National	MT0000101- MT0000105

Conservation Measures for <i>Posidonia</i> beds						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		shell <i>Pinna nobilis</i> .				
CM_Po9	NO6 NO8	Assess feasibility of reinforcement and/or reintroduction of <i>P. nobilis</i> in coastal areas.	ERA/ experts	N+1 – N+3	National	MT0000101- MT0000105

Supporting Conservation Measures for <i>Posidonia</i> beds						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Po11	NO2 NO6 NO8 SSO23	Assess population of seahorses in at least 2 selected sites through regular surveys and divers' reports.	ERA/relevant experts and stakeholders	N+4	Site Specific	MT0000104 & MT0000105

## 4.7 - Reefs (coastal) (Habitat 1170) (Rc)

### Regional objectives:

- **RO13:** Ensure trans-boundary cooperation via exchange of information on coralligenous/maërl assemblages through established portals such as monitoring networks.

### National objectives:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO6:** Address priority knowledge gaps on vulnerable species and species important for the ecological functioning of key marine habitats and ecosystems.
- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO8:** The abundance and/or composition of selected marine species or species groups are indicative of good status of marine ecosystems and/or sustainable exploitation.
- **NO23:** Improve knowledge on the structure and functions of reefs in Maltese waters, including identification of typical species.
- **NO24:** Ensure that if evidence of coastal reef habitat deterioration is present, counter measures are taken.

### Site – specific objectives:

#### **MT0000101 - MT0000105:**

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.
- **SSO3:** Reduce high impact activities on sensitive habitats and species within at least 10% of MPAs.
- **SSO24:** To reduce physical disturbance, or other forms of disturbance on reefs by diving and boating in at least 10% of the MPAs.
- **SSO25:** Reduce the level of pressure caused by fishing activity and associated lost/discarded fishing gear on coastal reefs.

**MT0000101:**

- **SSO26:** Reduce pressures associated with diving and snorkelling activities on coastal reefs.
- **SSO27:** Increase public awareness about the importance of coastal reefs on site.

**MT0000102:**

- **SSO28:** Reduce to a minimum anthropogenic disturbance on reefs around the islet of Filfla.

Conservation Measures for Coastal Reefs						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Rc1	NO1 NO3 SSO3 SSO24 SSO27	Install at least two beach signs to inform public about regulations and importance of reefs and associated species.	ERA	N+4	Site Specific	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Rc2	NO2 NO4 NO24 SSO2 SSO3 SSO25	Collect data on the distribution and extent/damage of ALDFG through the use of an established process/system for removal of litter on the seabed, and removal of such ALDFG, where possible.	ERA, DFA/ NGOs, TM, Dive centres	N – N+4	National	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Rc3	SSO2 SSO3	Studies incorporated within the ongoing Life Integrated project <sup>12</sup> will examine anchoring and	ERA/ relevant experts	N+3	National	MT0000101- MT0000105

Conservation Measures for Coastal Reefs						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		mooring pressures.				
CM_Rc4	NO1 NO2 NO3 NO4 SSO3 SSO26 SSO27	Evaluate effectiveness of current snorkel trails through survey questionnaires, and if necessary, consider creation of new ones.	ERA/ relevant stakeholders	N+3 – N+5	Site Specific	MT0000101
CM_Rc5	NO2 NO4 NO8	Develop and implement a control scheme with fishers to protect exploited sea urchins from unsustainable fishing practices and consider closed seasons.	ERA, DFA/ Fishers	N+2	National	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Rc6	NO1 NO4 SSO3 SSO24 SSO26 SSO27	Develop and promote a set of sustainable diving practices involving at least 20% of dive centres.	ERA/MTA, Dive centres	N – N+2	National	MT0000101- MT0000105
CM_Rc7	NO1 NO3 SSO3 SSO24 SSO26 SSO27	Develop, publish and promote an annual list of priority dive sites to reduce pressure on	ERA/MTA, Dive centres	N – N+8	National	MT0000101- MT0000105

Conservation Measures for Coastal Reefs						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		very sensitive sites.				
<b>CM_Rc8</b>	<b>NO4</b> <b>SSO3</b> <b>SSO28</b>	Maintain or enhance, as necessary, existing regulation of anthropogenic disturbance on reefs around the islet of Filfa.	<b>ERA, TM</b>	N - N+8	Site Specific	MT0000102

Supporting Conservation Measures for Coastal Reefs						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
<b>CM_Rc9</b>	<b>RO13</b> <b>NO6</b> <b>NO8</b> <b>NO23</b> <b>NO24</b>	A study covering at least 30% of coastal reefs is initiated to assess associated species status and identify priority areas for strict protection and development of monitoring processes.	<b>ERA/DFA,</b> relevant experts and stakeholders	N – N+3	National	MT0000101- MT0000105

## 4.8 - Reefs (offshore, deep-sea) (Habitat 1170) (Rd)

### Regional objectives:

- **RO14:** Ensure trans-boundary cooperation via exchange of information on coralligenous/maërl assemblages through established portals such as monitoring networks.

### National objectives:

- **NO1:** Raise public awareness and appreciation of the habitats and species among the public to achieve at least a 20% increase in awareness of the public until N+8 on the basis of public perception surveys.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO5:** Ensure availability of centralised information/data on marine species/habitats and pressures and threats thereon.
- **NO6:** Address priority knowledge gaps on vulnerable species and species important for the ecological functioning of key marine habitats and ecosystems.
- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO8:** The abundance and/or composition of selected marine species or species groups are indicative of good status of marine ecosystems and/or sustainable exploitation.

### Site – specific objectives:

#### **MT0000113, MT0000115, MT0000116, MT0000117 & MT0000118:**

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.
- **SSO29:** Occurrence of ALDFG in offshore MPAs is reduced through the adoption of sustainable fishing practices.

Conservation Measures for Deep-Sea Reefs						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Rd1	<b>NO4</b> <b>SSO29</b>	Develop a set of action measures to reduce ALDFG in offshore waters.	<b>ERA, DFA</b>	N+1 – N+2	National	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000116 MT0000117 MT0000118

<b>CM_Rd2</b>	<b>NO4 NO5 SSO2 SSO29</b>	Identify and map most sensitive areas to deployment of Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs).	<b>ERA, DFA</b>	N+4	National	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000116 MT0000117 MT0000118
<b>CM_Rd3</b>	<b>NO4 NO5 SSO2 SSO29</b>	Explore options to enhance and facilitate reporting scheme(s) for ALDFG and assess and outline potential automated system-process(es) for logging and disseminating this data.	<b>ERA, DFA / relevant stakeholders</b>	TBD	National	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000116 MT0000117 MT0000118

<b>Supporting Conservation Measures for Deep-Sea Reefs</b>						
<b>Reference</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Lead/ supporting parties</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Applicable level</b>	<b>Applicable sites</b>
<b>CM_Rd4</b>	<b>RO14 NO1 NO3</b>	Produce a list of important deep-sea fauna and flora within Maltese FMZ, and improve knowledge on their ecological role and functions to enable development of status indicators.	<b>ERA/UoM</b>	N+3	National	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000116 MT0000117 MT0000118
<b>CM_Rd5</b>	<b>RO14 NO6 NO7 NO8 SSO2</b>	Assess deep-sea biodiversity in terms of community and ecosystem	<b>ERA/UoM (Department of Biology)</b>	Ongoing - N+2	National	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000116 MT0000117 MT0000118

		ecology and on pressures/ impacts influencing marine species and habitats.				
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## 4.9 - Caves (coastal) (Habitat 8330) (Cc)

### Regional objectives:

- **RO15:** Exchange approaches to ensure protection and management of caves with other MPA managers through regional cooperation.

### National objectives:

- **NO2:** An increasing trend in the engagement of public and private sectors in the management and data collection processes within MPAs, based on the number of individual contacts established per year.
- **NO3:** Ensure regular exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- **NO4:** Reduction of wide-ranging threats and pressures on a National scale including *inter alia*:
  - Reduction trend in the extent of physical disturbance, and other forms of disturbance, on the marine environment and associated species as a result of anthropogenic activity.
  - Declining trend in the number/abundance of litter items in the marine environment.
  - Stable or declining trend in the abundance or distribution of introduced non-indigenous species in the marine environment.
- **NO6:** Address priority knowledge gaps on vulnerable species and species important for the ecological functioning of key marine habitats and ecosystems.
- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO8:** The abundance and/or composition of selected marine species or species groups are indicative of good status of marine ecosystems and/or sustainable exploitation.
- **NO25:** Enhance the protection regime of highly diverse caves by N+3.
- **NO26:** Improve knowledge on the ecological characteristics of coastal caves in relation to the presence of species indicative of good status in Maltese waters.

### Site-specific objectives

#### **MT0000101 - MT0000105:**

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.
- **SSO3:** Reduce high impact activities on sensitive habitats and species within at least 10% of MPAs.

#### **MT0000103 - MT0000105:**

- **SSO30:** To reduce physical disturbance, or other forms of disturbance on caves by diving and boating in at least 10% of the MPAs.

Conservation Measures for Coastal Caves						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Cc1	NO4 NO245 SSO3 SSO30	Access restrictions for diving and other commercial and recreational uses are established for highly diverse and sensitive caves.	ERA, TM /(external experts, if required)	By end of N+4	site-specific	MT0000101 - MT0000105
CM_Cc2	NO3 NO4 SSO3 SSO30	Produce a Code of Conduct for commercial activities in caves in a manner that will facilitate its distribution through existing, trusted maritime channels.	ERA/ respective stakeholders	N+2	Site Specific	MT0000101 - MT0000105
CM_Cc3	NO2 NO4 NO7 SSO2 SSO3 SSO30	Engage at least 20% of dive centres in surveillance and monitoring of caves.	ERA/divers	N – N+9	Site Specific	MT0000101 - MT0000105

Supporting Conservation Measures for Coastal Caves						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Cc4	RO15 NO6 NO7 NO8 NO26 SSO2	Characterise specific, large and/or interesting coastal caves, including their physical dimensions, ecological community structures and	ERA/ external experts	N – N+1	Site Specific	MT0000101 - MT0000105

Supporting Conservation Measures for Coastal Caves						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		threats/pressures present via 'broad-brush' surveys to create priority list of highly diverse caves requiring strict conservation measures.				
CM_Cc5	NO6 NO7 NO8 NO26	5 caves are assessed for their importance / representativity within this site and associated fish and invertebrate species are evaluated/ determined.	ERA/ external experts	N+1 – N+2	Site Specific	MT0000103 MT0000105
CM_Cc6	NO7 SSO2	A set of accessible caves within this site are assessed for impact from diving.	ERA/ external experts, if required	N+1 – N+2	Site Specific	MT0000103 MT0000104 MT0000105
CM_Cc7	NO7 SSO30	Monitoring/ surveillance of 20 coastal caves is conducted in relation to assessment of conservation status.	ERA/ (external experts)	N+8	Site Specific	MT0000101 - MT0000105

## 4.10 - Caves (offshore, deep-sea) (Habitat 8330) (Cd)

### Regional objectives:

- **RO16:** Exchange approaches to ensure protection and management of caves with other MPA managers through regional cooperation.

### National objectives:

- **NO7:** Ensure robust assessment of conservation status of habitat and species listed in the relevant annexes of the HD and BD on the basis of regular data collection processes.
- **NO27:** Improve knowledge on function and biodiversity of offshore caves (as feasible/possible) by N+4.
- **NO28:** Ensure cave integrity is not threatened by economic activities (e.g. fishing).

### Site-specific objectives

#### **MT0000113, MT0000115, MT0000118:**

- **SSO2:** Improve knowledge on the interactions of anthropogenic activity with marine elements within MPAs.

*Other site-specific measures for deep-sea caves are not considered feasible. National level is sufficient to address common pressures on the sites.*

Supporting Conservation Measures for Deep-sea Caves <sup>13</sup>						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
CM_Cd1	RO16 NO7 NO27	If feasible, conduct a survey of selected, accessible caves to create priority list of highly diverse caves requiring strict conservation measures.	ERA/ external experts (if required)	N – N+3	Site- Specific	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000118
CM_Cd2	RO16 NO7 NO28 SSO2	The (potential) impact/threat of different (economic)	ERA/ respective experts	N+2	Site- Specific	MT0000113 MT0000115 MT0000118

<sup>13</sup> Additional conservation measures for deep-sea caves may be elaborated following the necessary surveys/assessments.

Supporting Conservation Measures for Deep-sea Caves <sup>13</sup>						
Reference	Objectives	Measure	Lead/ supporting parties	Time frame	Applicable level	Applicable sites
		activities is assessed for this habitat type, and addressed as relevant.				



# Public Consultation Submissions & Responses

Intent & Objectives:

Conservation Objectives and Measures for Malta's  
Marine Natura 2000 Sites

June 2019

Environment & Resources Authority



## CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Ref No.	Name of Stakeholder / Date	Comments Received	Response / Remarks
1	Jon Camilleri 11/06/2019	<p>My view is that we need to find a balance between stakeholders naturally, here in my hometown we have to protect the commercial interest of contractors who work to save up for their pension and have to have their skills certified by people who think they know better.</p> <p>I have made recommendations and plans for laboratories to be able to allow non-profit organisations to do their research whilst appealing for funding not to be restricted to research organisations alone even I know how to write to a lawyer and form an association, time and resources permitting that seems to be the main stumbling block so far some of which are managed by your own soldiers and officials.</p> <p>I took initiative as well I interviewed hunters, tried to inspire more corporate social responsibility and renewable energy, without resources I cannot plan any further, and, I am the embarrassment of the digital industry as other operators are making more billions than I am I read on <a href="http://www.bloomberg.com">http://www.bloomberg.com</a>, Dwardu we have a problem!</p> <p>Governmental</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Building Regulation Office</a> - governmental</li> <li><a href="#">MEPA - Home</a> - I <a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/">https://www.sciencedirect.com/</a> actually had friendships here until some of their interviewers pissed me off honestly and I wrote back with sincere anger naturally.</li> <li><a href="#">Ornis Committee</a></li> </ol> <p>Non governmental</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="https://birdlifemalta.org/">https://birdlifemalta.org/</a> these people work really hard to protect our natural heritage...</li> <li><a href="#">Għaqda Kaccaturi Nassaba Konservazzjonisti Mellihin</a>, yes we know some people like shooting birds, try respecting the regulations and don't shoot near a school for example, one might improve online and printed information strategy (marketing for dummies kind of approach or marketing for compliance officers kind of approach).</li> </ol> <p>magazines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">ScienceDirect.com   Science, health and medical journals, full text articles and books.</a> or Google Scholar</li> </ol>	<p>Various stakeholders from different sectors related to the future management of marine protected areas (MPAs) were consulted, coupled with a series of desktop exercises.</p> <p>MPA conservation objectives and measures will be based on knowledge of the conservation status and pressures known to occur within each MPA, and hence will be considering regulation of activities with a view to work towards maximum contribution of the protected sites to the conservation status of the habitats and species in question.</p> <p>The draft conservation measures for the MPAs will be open for public consultation on our website in due course.</p>

		<p>or <a href="http://www.researchgate.net">http://www.researchgate.net</a>, or <a href="http://www.um.edu.mt">http://www.um.edu.mt</a>, the government itself provides useful research services as well that are very professional (our sarcasm sometimes is a form of negotiation).</p> <p>2. <a href="http://www.treehugger.com">http://www.treehugger.com</a> it is actually very useful for do it yourself naturally capital and industrial projects need more civil engineering and serious professional work to be planned, so that nobody gets hurt. there are enough accidents reported on local newspapers.</p> <p>If you see a <b>work in progress</b> sign, follow your intuition, bypass the sign and allow the workmen (women) to work notifying only of exceptions and disasters assume they know what they are doing.</p> <p>I know workmen can be noisy sometimes sorry about that!</p>	
2	Vince Attard Obo Nature Trust Malta 25/06/2019	<p>MPAs management should go beyond just protection on Paper</p> <p>Marine MPAs should have a zoning set up with areas designated as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No activity what so ever</li> <li>- Only Diving areas with No boats allowed in the area</li> <li>- Boating areas and diving areas</li> <li>- No fishing activity would be allowed in the Zones</li> </ul> <p>Each site should have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A carrying capacity for Diving with bookings - this needs to be coordinated with diving stakeholders and a central body to take bookings</li> <li>- Marine wardens to patrol site to make sure that regulations to sites are observed</li> <li>- In those sites that have caves only experienced divers should be allowed to enter in order to make the least disturbance to biodiversity</li> <li>- No shipping routes should pass though these sites especially big ships</li> <li>- In the case of sites close to land environment friendly moorings should be made in those areas where boating is allowed to stop (drop anchor). No anchors should be allowed within the Zones</li> </ul> <p>Each site should offer information and legislation clearly observed</p> <p>Manager of the site should coordinate with all stakeholders involved for a proper management of the site</p>	<p>ERA has taken note of the suggestions made. MPA conservation objectives and measures will be based on knowledge of the conservation status and pressures known to occur within each MPA, and hence will be considering regulation of activities with a view to work towards maximum contribution of the protected sites to the conservation status of the habitats and species in question.</p>

			The draft measures for the MPAs will be open for public consultation on our website in due course.
3	Janina Laurent Obo BirdLife Malta 25/06/2019	<p><b>Establish synergistic management structure for Special Protection Areas (SPAs), coastal and offshore Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance (SACs)</b></p> <p>The responsibilities should be clearly defined within governmental structures to avoid conflict of competencies where one authority is responsible for the management of the sites, ideally within the Environment and Resources Authority. To create synergies between the enforcement of management plans of SPAs and SACs, we evaluate it as necessary to address the current case of fragmented enforcement responsibilities between Malta Police Force, Malta Armed Forces and Transport Malta at sea and to clearly define enforcement responsibilities.</p> <p>As a cooperative management approach between SACs and SPAs, we recommend to identify relevant stakeholders involved in the management and monitoring of these sites as part of projects and other programmes (e.g. environmental organisations, local councils, university groups) as well as stakeholder groups regularly active at such sites (e.g. divers, sailors, climbers) and identify common interests in line with management plans of such sites.</p> <p><b>Regulate the main economic activities within coastal Marine Protected Areas</b></p> <p>Main threats to marine life can be caused by the following economic sectors/activities. These impacts need to be addressed by the conservation objectives and measures for Malta's Marine Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>In order to guarantee that economic activities implemented by the private sector within Marine Natura 2000 sites abide to the management plans, it is necessary to allocate a sufficient budget to cover all costs arising from managing the MPAs, partly provided by the private entity and partly provided by the government in joint agreement.</p> <p>The impacts related to the various economic activities could be as follows:</p>	<p>ERA has taken note of the suggestions made. MPA conservation objectives and measures will be based on knowledge of the conservation status and pressures known to occur within each MPA, and hence will be considering regulation of activities with a view to work towards maximum contribution of the protected sites to the conservation status of the habitats and species in question.</p> <p>In terms of strategic frameworks, a holistic approach, noting all applicable legal frameworks and respective obligations, is followed.</p> <p>The draft measures for the MPAs will be open for public consultation on our website in due course.</p>

		<p>Fisheries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seabird bycatch and gaps in controlling measures to monitor bycatch</li> <li>- Threats from marine litter, including fishing gear</li> <li>- Noise and light pollution</li> <li>- Aquaculture: Collisions and entanglement with fish farm structures, risk of oiling and loss of waterproofing, attraction of prey species and displacement of Yelkouan Shearwater, Scopoli's Shearwater and Mediterranean Storm-petrel from current rafting and foraging grounds</li> </ul> <p>Maritime transport and maritime tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bunkering areas create noise and light pollution</li> <li>- Boat tourism (especially party boats) create noise and light pollution especially to sensitive caves and cliff sites</li> <li>- Container ships and large vessels create increased air pollution</li> </ul> <p>It is furthermore necessary to draft a comprehensive policy and ensure coherence with relevant policy frameworks and strategies (national and international) to promote the integration of environmental concerns into other applying policies such as fisheries management, joint recommendations with other EU Member States and national marine spatial plans.</p> <p><b>Strengthen and improve stakeholder involvement and cooperation among entities</b></p> <p>To avoid tension and conflicts amongst the different stakeholders operating in the area of MPAs, potential impacts, threats, and opportunities have to be identified and addressed. It has to be guaranteed from both, governmental side and private sector, that all planned activities will be implemented in close cooperation and consultation with the responsible management authority for MPAs, at all times considering the sustainable maintenance of Malta's MPAs. The cooperation can be strengthened by actively involving non-governmental organisations and other relevant stakeholder into the implementation actions agreed upon under the MPA Management Plans and distribute responsibilities amongst involved stakeholder.</p>	
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		<p>The delivery of management plans needs to be supported by a sound communications plan which would have identified the target audiences, after having evaluated their knowledge on the matter through appropriate surveys. This would ensure participation and involvement and encourage cooperation.</p> <p><b>Increase awareness and support education efforts on marine species and habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By providing environmental education opportunities for children, young people and adults to connect with nature and empowering them to make environmentally responsible decisions</li> <li>- By undertaking regular clean-ups of sensitive sites and increase information for tourists and local population</li> </ul> <p><b>Create and establish an enforcement structure for coastal MPAs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By strengthening enforcement of environmental laws and transfer these to the remit of ERA</li> <li>- By developing a wildlife crime unit with responsibility over the sea</li> <li>- By identifying stakeholders that are able to manage these sites in partnership with the authorities</li> <li>- By providing capacity building and regular training</li> </ul> <p><b>Improve knowledge on and monitoring of species</b></p> <p>We recommend to establish scientific research programmes that conduct research studies and provide scientific data to enhance the Standard Data Forms for each MPA and close existing data gaps of the marine environment in the areas, especially for the sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar fix-Xlokk</li> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar tat-Tramuntana</li> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar ta' madwar Ghawdex</li> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar tal-Grigal</li> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar tal-Lvant</li> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar tal-Kangu</li> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar tal-Lbic</li> <li>- Żona fil-Baħar tan-Nofsinhar</li> </ul> <p>Adding on to this, we consider it as important to revise and evaluate management plans on a regularly basis to maintain good environmental status for the MPAs and</p>	
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		<p>implement regular monitoring and researching of the protected species and marine environment of the area in general.</p>	
		<p><b>Increase conservation efforts for selected species</b></p> <p>Our main interest lays on the protection and conservation of Malta's seabird species Yelkouan Shearwaters (<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>), European Storm-petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis</i>), and Scopoli's Shearwater (<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>). Therefore, we recommend to increase conservation efforts and to achieve a favourable conservation status for these bird species, especially in the marine protected areas important for them (MPAs listed in section above "Improve knowledge on and monitoring of species).</p>	
		<p><b>Ensure long-term stability and function of marine habitats and the overall ecosystem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By mapping the sensitivity of the threats (human pressures) that species and habitats face enables the identification of the best places to allocate human activities</li> <li>- By ensuring that Malta's spatial plan is effective and comprehensive data and modelling of habitats and species activity in the context of specific ecosystems are taken fully into account</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>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)</b></p> <p>Further to the fulfilment of the above directives, we would like to highlight that the following EU policies and legal framework are similarly important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive: (1) reporting of monitoring programmes, (2) six-year review of the different elements of the strategy by 2018 to 2021</li> <li>- Barcelona Convention: e.g. the national report on the technical implementation of the SPA &amp; Biodiversity Protocol</li> <li>- NBSAP: implementation due by 2020 with relevant objectives to the marine environment</li> <li>- National Integrated Maritime Strategy: implementation due by 2020</li> </ul>	