

Mediterranean Regional Workshop on Target 3 - Montpellier, France, 2 – 5 June 2025

## **Mediterranean Regional Communiqué on priorities for achieving the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 Target: A unified approach towards biodiversity conservation**

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Montpellier, June 5, 2025

### **1. Introduction**

From 2 to 5 June 2025, Convention on Biological Diversity focal points and representatives of protected areas management authorities from eight Mediterranean countries - **Bosnia & Herzegovina, Egypt, France, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Spain, Tunisia** - and representatives of international and regional organizations and initiatives - **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC for N&P), IUCN Med (Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature), NatureXpairs, Oceans 5, Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy (PBOL), Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), The MedFund, United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention Secretariat (UNEP/MAP)** - gathered in Montpellier, France, for a Mediterranean Regional Workshop on Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

The event was organized by the French government in collaboration with the **HAC for N&P Secretariat, UNEP/MAP and its Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC)**, with the support of **Plan Bleu** and **IUCN Med**.

The workshop enhanced understanding of the status of marine, coastal and terrestrial protected and conserved areas in the Mediterranean region. It provided an opportunity for participants to showcase national efforts and share their major gaps, challenges, and opportunities. The workshop also strengthened understanding of technical, scientific, and capacity needs at the national level, as well as of key topics such as Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), and the equity and governance aspects of the target. This will enable partners to provide support to Parties and relevant stakeholders more effectively.

Target 3<sup>1</sup> is the global commitment to protect and conserve 30 per cent of the Earth's lands and waters by 2030. Importantly, Target 3 goes well beyond coverage. It requires that protected and conserved areas are effectively managed, equitably governed and recognized with respect for the rights of local communities. It also commits governments to conserve the most important natural spaces and to ensure that these areas are connected to each other. In short, the elements of the target call for in situ conservation to be scaled up in ways that benefit both nature and people.

The *Protected Planet Report 2024* (<https://digitalreport.protectedplanet.net/>) provided a global evaluation of progress towards the Target 3 of the GBF. In the Mediterranean basin, coverage varied significantly between sub-regions<sup>2</sup>. In Southern Europe, 25.71% of terrestrial and inland waters were protected, while 13.14% of marine and coastal areas were protected in the region. In contrast, Northern Africa and Western Asia showed lower levels of coverage by protected and conserved areas, particularly in marine and coastal areas. In Northern Africa, coverage of terrestrial and inland waters by protected and conserved areas was 21.55%, and just 2.23% for marine and coastal areas. Further, in Western Asia, coverage of terrestrial and inland waters by protected and conserved areas was 12.66%, and 6.38% for marine and coastal areas. In addition, the mean coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) by protected and conserved areas was 69.16% in Southern Europe, 41.46% in Northern Africa, and 35.2% in Western Asia.

International organizations have recognized the Mediterranean region's commitment to ambitious actions aimed at addressing biodiversity loss. The Barcelona Convention serves as a unique forum for cooperation among countries in the region, fostering collaboration and shared initiatives, in close partnership with the relevant regional and international organizations. In 2021, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted a Post-2020 Regional Strategy on marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, thereby strengthening their commitment to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.

This workshop took place at a strategically important moment on the global agenda, just few days ahead of the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3), which will be held in Nice, France from 9 to 13 June 2025, where the global community will gather to discuss solutions and make commitments for ocean conservation and sustainable use. This will be a crucial opportunity for the Mediterranean region to make its voice heard on key global marine issues.

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<sup>1</sup> GBF Target 3: "Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories".

<sup>2</sup> The coverage statistics in the *Protected Planet Report 2024* for Northern Africa, Southern Europe, and Western Asia are based on analyses completed by UNEP-WCMC, using data from the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and the World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM). Sub-regional coverage was calculated using the United Nations Statistics Division's geographic regions (M49) (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>) and includes countries and territories outside the Mediterranean region.

## 2. Key priorities, recommendations and areas for action

The workshop identified key priorities and recommendations for action to boost the regional implementation of the 30x30 Target. Participants identified the following key actions:

- Further strengthen political will and commitments.
- Further enhance coherence in national, regional and international policies.
- Enhance synergies among ministries, public institutions, and stakeholders.
- Increase the coverage of protected and conserved areas in areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems in the Mediterranean, and notably in the Eastern and Southern countries
- Increase the number and coverage of protected areas with enhanced protection levels.
- Accurately, recognize, identify and report OECMs and develop ecological corridors in line with the OECM criteria and guidance.
- Update or develop national strategies and action plans with clearly identified monitoring frameworks for system expansion and management and aligning with regional strategies and the GBF 30x30 Target.
- Further develop Mediterranean protected areas policy and governance structures to be more equitable, incorporating local stakeholders, integrated with other sectors and responsive to local protected area conditions.
- Strengthen national legislation and ensure effective enforcement and violations control mechanisms to produce better outcomes for protected areas.
- Identify protected areas within recognized ecologically important areas, e.g., Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs).
- Improve and ensure that protected areas and OECMs management structures are effective and well-coordinated across government and stakeholders to improve knowledge and ensure proper management of protected areas and OECMs.
- Sharing experience and information on biodiversity and protected areas at national level, and at regional level through the regional technical centres.
- Build capacity of protected area managers, staff and stakeholders and communicate on protected area values to decision makers and larger external audiences to raise their awareness.
- Ensure support for the long-term financial sustainability of protected areas through capacity development and sustainable financing mechanisms including trust funds, carbon credits and other innovative financing mechanisms.
- Boost biodiversity conservation beyond marine protected areas in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction through other sectoral and spatial tools such as Specially Protected

Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs), Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

- Enhance protected and conserved areas contribution to sustainable development goals, the green/blue economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### **3. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the workshop underscored the critical need for regional and international cooperation and partnerships to effectively and swiftly implement the 30x30 Target of the Kunming-Montreal GBF. Participants emphasized the importance of collaboration among national governments, local communities and international organizations to address the identified challenges. Sharing knowledge, tools, and resources will be essential to bolster collective efforts toward biodiversity conservation.

Furthermore, enhancing collaboration between SPA/RAC, HAC for N&P and IUCN, as well as other regional organizations, will be pivotal in fostering effective conservation strategies. It is crucial for all stakeholders to actively engage in these collaborative efforts to achieve the 30x30 Target.

The HAC for N&P has provided capacity-building on its 30x30 Solutions Toolkit and the HAC 30x30 matchmaking platform and the Rapid Development Mechanism as tools to support the implementation of GBF Target 3. Country representatives expressed their interest to adhere to the HAC, strengthen their engagement and submit their requests for these tools at both regional and national levels.

This communiqué will be disseminated and presented at UNOC-3 to enhance visibility and support for regional and international initiatives, aligning with the Nice Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration. A unified approach toward biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean region can ensure a sustainable future for both nature and people.