

LIFE22-NAT-EL-LIFE MareNatura

“Conservation of priority species of marine megafauna in Greece and Italy”

Grant Agreement Number 101113792

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2. Abbreviations

APM: Assistant Project Manager
CT: Communication Team
DMP: Data Management Plan
DMT: Data Management Team
EB: External Body
GA: Grant Agreement
GEAS: General Assembly
GPP: Green Public Procurement
FM: Financial Manager
FMT: Financial Management Team
KoM: Kick-Off Meeting
MBHT: Marine Biodiversity Hot-spots Team
MC Task Force: Marine Conservation Task Force
MOBI: Mediterranean Offshore Biodiversity Inventory
PC: Project Coordinator
PGD: Project Guidelines Document
PMG: Project Management Group
PMT: Project Management Team
PT: Policy Team
QAP: Quality Assurance Plan
SCPT: Systematic Conservation Planning Team
SST: Species Surveys Team
TC: Technical Committee
TL: Task Leader
WP: Work Package
WPL: Work Package Leader
WT: Working Team
WTL: Work Team Leader



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3. Summary

Deliverable **D1.1** is the “**Project Guidelines Document (PGD)**” of LIFE22-NAT-EL-LIFE MareNatura project: “Conservation of priority species of marine megafauna in Greece and Italy”. It is an internal document which sets the structure, communication channels, methods and reporting periodicity internally and to EC, as well as the procedures for conflict solving. It also contains: i) the “**Quality Assurance Plan (QAP)**” aimed at establishing a proactive process of planning, implementing, and monitoring the quality actions and processes throughout the project in order to ensure the high quality of the deliverables and the overall project quality, and ii) a Guide on “**Green Public Procurement (GPP)**” aiming to facilitate the use of GPP procedures for (a) the purchase of equipment and consumables and their use in the project, (b) office operation and (c) implementation in project actions. Being a living document, the PGD may change depending on the project needs.

4. Management and decision-making structure

The LIFE MareNatura management structure consists of the:

- I) Project Management Team (PMT)
- II) General Assembly (GEAS) [Beneficiaries’ Coordinators in the Grant Agreement]
- III) Technical Committee (TC) [Technical Facilitation Team in the Grant Agreement]
- IV) Work Packages (WPs)
- V) Working Teams (WTs)
- VI) External Bodies (EBs)

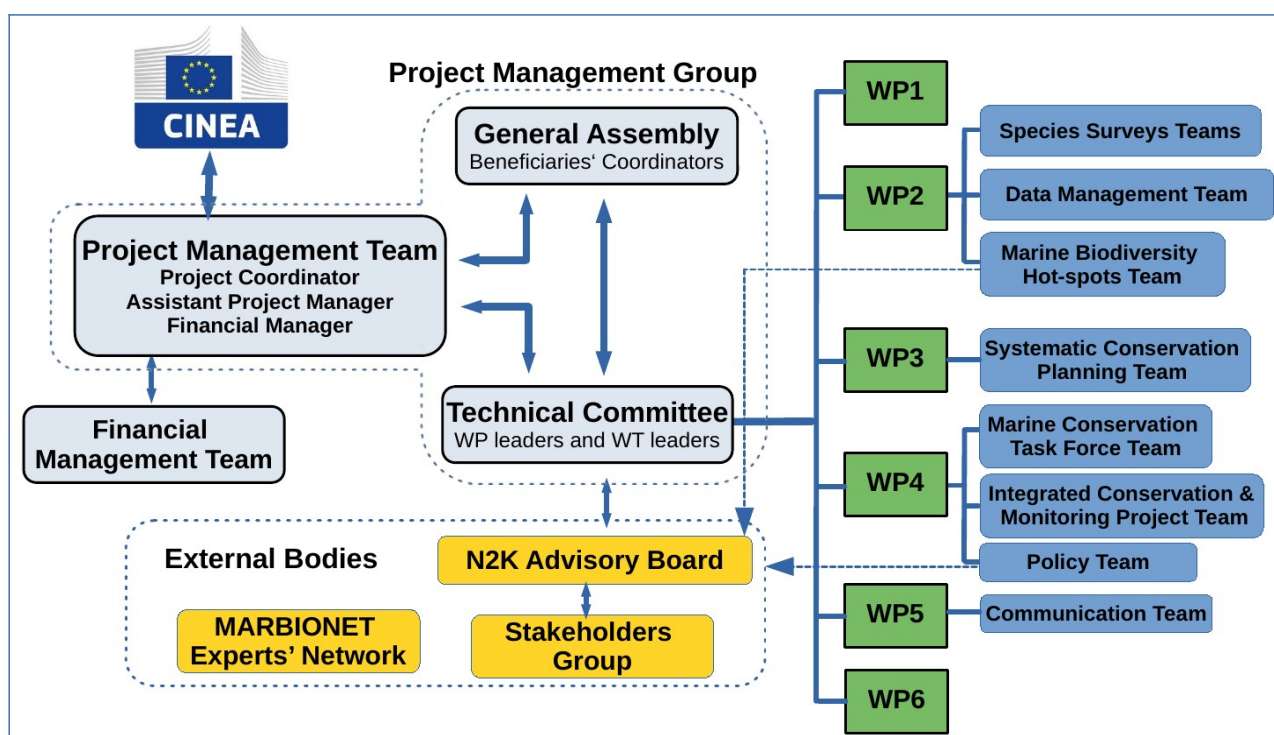


Figure 1: The management structure of the LIFE22-NAT-EL-LIFE MareNatura project

The Project Management Team (PMT), together with the General Assembly and the Technical Committee form the **Project Management Group (PMG)**.

I) The Project Management Team (PMT): It is responsible for the day-to-day project management, it maintains contact with the Technical Committee and the coordinators of the project beneficiaries, as well as with the EC / CINEA Project officer. PMT consists of the Project Coordinator, the Assistant Project Manager, and the Financial Manager:

Project Coordinator (PC): has the overall responsibility for the coordination, management and smooth running of the project implementation, as well as for the timely submission of high-quality deliverables, and represents the consortium to the EC and third parties. The Project Coordinator also represents the Coordinator in the General Assembly and the Technical Committee.

Assistant Project Manager (APM): A person with experience in the management of LIFE projects, assists the PC, and is responsible for the optimization of project performance and implementation in accordance with the LIFE Regulation & Standard Administrative Provisions, as well as for ensuring the efficiency and continuity of the project implementation through clear and precise communication with all parties involved.

Financial Manager (FM): Member of the financial administration of the Coordinator, responsible for the smooth financial operation and monitoring and the financial reporting of the project. The FM is the Leader of the **Financial Management Team (FMT)**, which consists of the Financial Officers of each partner responsible for the project.

II) General Assembly (GEAS): The GEAS consists of one representative per beneficiary. It decides on general processes taking into account the proposals and suggestions of the Coordinator and the Technical Committee, contributes to the overall management of the project, ensures the application by each partner of the Grant Agreement and the Partnership Agreement, and participates in decision-making on strategic issues and conflict resolution. Over the duration of the LIFE MareNatura project, six formal GEAS meetings are foreseen to take place, which will be combined with the annual project meetings.

III) Technical Committee (TC): The Technical Committee consists of the WP leaders and the Team leaders. It is responsible for the implementation of the project's actions and for the support of the project's day-to-day technical and scientific tasks, in direct collaboration with the PMT. The TC will participate in decision-making on strategic issues and conflict resolution and will be responsible for the preparation of the work plan, which through the regular members' communication will ensure the smooth implementation of all actions. TC will also be responsible for the working specifications of the actions, the thematic teams' coordination meetings, the quarterly technical and financial reporting, the planning documents and project monitoring issues.



IV) Work Packages (WPs): The project is being implemented through six (6) WPs. Each WP has a **Work Package Leader (WPL)** who is responsible for the smooth implementation of the respective WP, as well as **Task Leaders (TLs)** assigned to each task. The WPLs and TLs have the relevant background, experience, and time availability to coordinate the activities of the teams involved in in different tasks and activities.

V) Working Teams (WTs): Different WT's will be established at the Kick-off Meeting (KoM) and their tasks within the PMG will be specified in order to ensure smooth and effective collaboration between beneficiaries. Each team has a **Working Team Leader (WTL)**, who is responsible for coordinating the activities of the team and assure that all tasks are executed in line with the work plan and project quality management involving the review, approval and accurate submission of the deliverables, in close collaboration and communication with the TC. The WTL will work in close collaboration with the WP leader to which the WT is assigned to and with the TC.

The following teams will be proposed to the KoM for approval by the GEAS (in parenthesis the WP under which each team operates).

Species Surveys Teams – SSTs (WP2):

There are four (4) SSTs based on the actions to be implemented:

a) On-site species surveys team that will be formed by a1) the seabirds' team, a2) the marine turtles' team and a3) the marine mammals' team, and it will supervise/implement the surveys on the breeding colonies and the nesting sites of the target species in order to assess the breeding populations and other parameters (e.g. breeding performance) of the target species, as well as collect biological samples for the DNA and isotope analyses.

b) Telemetry team that will be formed by b1) the seabirds telemetry team, b2) the marine turtles telemetry team and b3) the marine mammals telemetry team, and will be responsible for the placement of transmitters on the target species and their monitoring,

c) Pelagic surveys team that will be formed by c1) the aerial surveys team concerning the marine mammals, marine turtles and seabirds and c2) the boat surveys team referring to seabirds, marine turtles and marine mammals surveys,

d) Underwater noise/bio-acoustics team, consisting of partner experts that will plan, deploy sensors and hydrophones and analyze the respective data, to assess the impact of underwater noise and the distribution of target species and threats in various spatial scales.

Because of the importance of the SSTs for the project implementation, each team will be represented with a team leader in the TC.

Data Management Team – DMT (WP2): The DMT will be responsible for the collection, organization and management of all field data (telemetry, aerial, oceanographic data as well as population and other data by the target species monitoring in colonies and nesting sites), based on existing big data storage platforms (e.g. LIFEWATCH, OBIS) and taking into consideration ethics for open and FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable) data access. The DMT



supervised by the DMT Leader and the Ecological Data Manager, will be responsible for producing the **Data Management Plan (DMP)** for the project, which will be updated annually. The DMP will contain information on the suggested policies, standards, and sustainability activities related to the created data tools and services, to ensure the management of knowledge in the project is maintained following the FAIR principles. The DMP covers the data, documents and solutions created within the project. It describes the data and metadata standards, availability, curation and preservation methods.

Marine Biodiversity Hot-spots Team – MBHT (WP2): The team will be involved in the identification of the marine biodiversity hot-spots and their mapping using standardized methods (external experts will also be advised). The identified hot-spots will form the **Mediterranean Offshore Biodiversity Inventory (MOBI)** in the project area. The sites within the territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Greece will be proposed to be designated as Natura 2000 site, increasing the marine protected areas network of Greece. Quantitative species-oriented conservation objectives will be set for the proposed sites, as well as for the existing Natura 2000 sites with a marine component in order to effectively monitor their management and protection with the collaboration of all beneficiaries.

Systematic Conservation Planning Team – SCPT (WP3): The SCPT will be dealing with the Maritime Spatial Planning based on thematic sensitivity maps for species, groups of species per threat and pressure, under different climate and management scenarios. Partners involved: UAEGEAN, HCMR, ISPRA, NCC and NOA.

Marine Conservation (MC) Task Force Team (WP4): The Team will be coordinated by NECCA and refers to the establishment of a Marine Conservation Task Force. The MC Task Force will consist of NECCA staff (10 new plus 4 existing staff members) which will be trained in the framework of the project by the Conservation Officers of all beneficiaries and will have the skills and expertise to take over the monitoring activities after the end of the project. In the framework of the team, a special group, the **Marine Biodiversity Team**, consisting of NECCA and HCMR members will be responsible for the coordination of funding concerning marine protected areas and biodiversity. The Task Force will be intensively involved in the project field work activities, mobilizing also the NECCA's local unit resources. The Marine Conservation Task Force Team will include the **Integrated Conservation & Monitoring Project Team** that will be dealing with the development of a cost-effective monitoring system, which will provide data for the Habitats and Birds Directives reporting as well as for the descriptors of the Marine Strategic Framework Directive, for the assessment of the Good Environmental Status in both countries. The Monitoring System will be developed by NCC together with experts from WaterProof and project partners and will be performed in a pilot basis during the last two years of the project's duration by the MC Task Force of NECCA and will be promoted for further use in other Mediterranean regions by NECCA and ISPRA.



Policy Team – PT (WP4): PT will be coordinated by the NECCA Coordinator and will involve a core team of officers of the associated beneficiaries that will participate in the project networking, organizing committees and thematic networks, as well as interacting with stakeholders and experts’ networks in the sense of mobilizing other regional networks and lobbying for the integration of biodiversity hot spots into the N2K network.

Communication Team – CT (WP5): The Team will be coordinated by UoC and the Communication Leader will be responsible for the implementation of project communication and public awareness actions. The Communication Leader will ensure the development and application of unified methodologies for all communication and dissemination actions that will be implemented in collaboration with the Project Communication Assistant (CA). The CT will be further assisted by experienced members of other beneficiaries (HOS, ARCHELON, MOM and HCMR), who will be responsible for contributing to communication and public awareness actions.

Table 1: Work packages of the LIFE MareNatura project and the associated Working Teams

WP no	WP Title	WP responsible	Working Teams
WP1	Project management and coordination	HCMR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Management Team
WP2	Identification of marine biodiversity hot spots	HCMR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species Surveys Teams • Data Management Team • Marine Biodiversity Hot-spot Team
WP3	Development of a decision support tool	HCMR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maritime Spatial Planning Team
WP4	Sustainability, replication and exploitation of project results	NECCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Conservation Team • Networking and Policy Team • Integrated Conservation and Monitoring Project Team
WP5	Dissemination and communication of the project	UoC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Team
WP6	Monitoring and evaluation of the project	HCMR	

VI) External Bodies

N2K Advisory Board: A board of the competent ministries that will reassure the involvement and consultation of the working groups, the project team, marine stakeholders and will pursue the maximum political compromise for the adoption of the proposed delineation and protection measures for the conservation of the megafauna species’ populations and their marine hot-spots.

Stakeholders Group: A group of stakeholders involving representatives from the competent authorities and various economic sectors affecting the marine ecosystems (PAs, fisheries, tourism/recreation, offshore wind farms, hydrocarbons, marine traffic) will be established in close



collaboration with PMG and supervised by the Policy Team to facilitate communication, transfer of experience and consulting users aiming to public awareness and consensus on commonly accepted solutions.

MARBIONET Experts Network

A network of marine conservation experts, NGOs and relevant Networks from other Mediterranean countries or international (e.g. BirdLife International, Global Sea Turtles Network, ACCOBAMS), will be established, aiming to exchange knowledge and information, transfer expertise and coordinate the conservation efforts for marine biodiversity at Mediterranean scale. The network will involve scientists, NGOs, as well as, actors involved in the species conservation and maritime spatial planning. The MARBIONET aims to exchange information and knowledge achieving synergies based on the project's implementation and results.

5. Communication channels

Communication between the members of the consortium will be mostly performed through the following channels:

a) E-mails: a living mailing list has been created, which contains all the members of the project by partner and WP/Task.

b) Teleconferences: Regular meetings of the governing bodies of the project and of WP groups and the Working Teams will take place through teleconferences, in accordance with the Green Procurement Guidelines.

c) Common project directory in the “cloud”: a common online directory will be created where material for the project will be available to the project beneficiaries. The directory will be also available through the project's web page. A Google directory is already available in Google Drive for this purpose.

d) Management software: The Project Coordinator and the Assistant Project Manager will establish a data management software (like OpenProject or Asana) to assign tasks and deliverables and to follow up the implementation of the project's actions.

e) In-person meetings: these meetings include the KoM and the Annual Project Meetings (which will be held in hybrid mode), as well as a series of other meetings like the three training workshops foreseen under Task 2.1.

Meetings of the teams and groups as well as technical meetings will be specially focused on the monitoring of project progress, achievements revision, decision-making and conflict resolution, and technical discussion.

Most of the project meetings will take place through teleconferences. The organizer of the online conference meetings will be responsible for preparing the project agenda and taking meeting minutes including the list of participants. In-person meetings will be organized for the regular project meetings by the PC, the APM, and the TC, who will manage these meetings and prepare all relevant materials.



Table 2: Types of meetings and communication

Communication activity	Means of Team communication	Participants	Frequency	Means of verification
Kick-Off Meeting (KoM)	In-person & Teleconference	All beneficiaries	At the start of the project	Agenda, Meeting minutes, group photo
GA meetings	In-person / Teleconference	All beneficiaries	At least once per year	Agenda, Meeting minutes
TC meetings	In-person / Teleconference	TC members	Every three months	Agenda (where relevant)
WP meetings	In-person / Teleconference	WP members	On demand	Agenda and Meeting minutes (where relevant)
WT meetings	In-person / Teleconference	WTL, Beneficiaries representatives	On demand	Agenda and Meeting minutes (where relevant)
Daily communication	E-mail / Teleconference	All beneficiaries	Regularly	
Technical meetings with the External Monitoring Team	In-person / Teleconference	Coordinator / all beneficiaries	At the start of the project, before Mid-term Reports, and at the end of the project	Agenda, Meeting minutes

6. Reporting

Under Article 21 of the Grant Agreement, the Coordinator will submit the following standardized deliverables on the Portal. In particular:

1. 1st Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure for M1-M6;
2. 2nd Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure for M7-M18;
3. A Periodic Report (both technical and financial) for M1-M24
4. 3rd Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure for M19-M30;
5. A Progress Report (both technical and financial) for M1-M34;
6. 4th Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure for M31-M42;



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7. A Periodic Report (both technical and financial) for M24-M48
8. 5th Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure for M43-M54;
9. 6th Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure for M55-M66;
10. A Final Report at the end of the project.
11. Audit Reports at the end of the project.

The periodic reports include a technical and a financial report. The technical report has to be submitted by the Coordinator through the Portal.

Technical report (in 2 parts):

The technical part includes an overview of the action implementation. It must be prepared using the template available in the Portal Periodic Reporting tool.

Part A: contains the structured tables with project information (retrieved from the Grant Management System).

Part B (the narrative part): mirrors the application form and requires the participants to report on differences (delays, work not implemented, new subcontracts, budget overruns etc.) It must be uploaded as PDF document. The technical report will be generated in collaboration with the APM and WPLs. The contributions of the WPLs will encompass the overall reporting period, covering all activities carried out in the first 34 months.

Financial report:

The financial report consists of structured forms from the Grant Management system, including:

- Individual financial statements for each Beneficiary;
- Explanation of the use of resources from each Beneficiary for the reporting period concerned;
- Periodic summary financial statement including the request for interim payment (filled by the Coordinator);
- Certificate on the Financial Statements for the total project cost for each Beneficiary with requested EU contribution \geq EUR 500,000.00.

The financial report will be digitally prepared by the Coordinator using the information directly provided by each Beneficiary, concerning: Declared costs, Requested reimbursement, Use of resources.

7. Conflict solving

If a conflict arises, the leader of the respective management level where the conflict arose (e.g. the WTL at the working team level, the WPL at the WP level etc) is primarily responsible for resolving the conflict by discussing with the involved parties in good faith. If the conflict persists, the leader can ask the leader of the higher hierarchical level to get involved and if the conflict further persists, the leader should notify the coordinator and bring the issue to the TC. The Coordinator is the responsible for taking final decisions on unresolved conflicts by weighing justly the opposite opinions and always on the benefit of the project and its aims.



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8. Quality Assurance Plan

The Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) is aimed at establishing a proactive process of planning, implementing, and monitoring the quality actions and processes throughout the project. The purpose of QAP is to describe actions and measures that will be undertaken by the consortium, in order to ensure accomplishment of this standard and project quality.

The main quality goals include:

- (a) to provide a guide for quality actions required by each partner,
- (b) to exhibit the project's quality performance in accordance to contractual requirements and
- (c) to decide the internal review, supervision procedures and roles.

Guidelines and instructions are provided to ensure the quality of the actions' implementation and the general quality of the project. Actions and measures are described to be implemented by the consortium, in order to ensure the quality of the project and its full conformance with the contractual requirements. The procedures include the following concepts: quality requirements of the project; planning and control; quality control of deliverables; quality control of communication materials; quality control of the project.

8.1 Quality requirements of the project

The LIFE MareNatura Consortium is deeply committed on assuring high quality results. To achieve these standards, management structure, as described previously, clearly defines roles and responsibilities to ensure them. In addition to the measures taken in the project and the management structure definition, the project will monitor/supervise the quality through periodic controls, being the Project Coordinator the final responsible, and WPLs in charge of quality accomplishment in deliverables generation.

The QAP was prepared based on the following directions:

- Achieving the desired level of quality by utilizing the means and human resources available to the project team.
- Meeting the technical requirements of the project within the prescribed schedule, internally with continuous and close collaboration, within the project team, but also externally with the EC / CINEA and stakeholders.
- Implementation of national and community legislation related to project.

8.2 Planning and control

- Initial Control

At the beginning of the project, each WPL together with the WTLs involved in the WP, will confirm and verify the project specifications based on the Grant Agreement, and the design and planning of the project.

At the start of each WP, the TC will discuss the WP strategy and will ensure that all participating partners understand and agree on the steps, their role and commitments. WPLs and WTLs will



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provide participating partners with details of the strategy and 6-monthly operational plan through video-conference meetings.

- Intermediate Control

At critical points during the implementation of the project, the output up to that point will be evaluated concerning the project specifications. Interim quality controls will be performed by the WPLs and the WTLs in collaboration with the TC.

The interim controls mainly concern the modification and readjustment of the schedule where the following items are examined:

- The WPs: Before the beginning of each WP and during its implementation, communication and collaborations are made between its members and the actual technical and organizational data are reviewed and compared for their compatibility with the initial planning and the contractual obligations (modification/reinforcement of the project team and/or supply of additional equipment if required).

- Identification of potential risks: The aim of this procedure is the improvement of any weaknesses presented during the implementation of the project through the identification of any risk that may affect the progress of the projects. In this context, there will be close cooperation with the APM, TC and the WTLs.

- Corrective and/or Preventive Actions: The aim of this process is the implementation of the appropriate corrective and/or preventive actions, so that the minimum possible deviations appear in the course of the project, both in terms of time and quality.

- Human resources management – Communication of Project Teams: Each member of a WT will be informed before the start of the work by the WTL of the responsibilities, tasks and obligations of his subject, as well as of general issues related to the project. Also, for a reasonable period of time, they will receive continuous informal information about the execution of their tasks, in combination with the procedures and instructions for the specific task.

- Final Control

Final controls, include quality controls of the deliverables and an overall review of the project after its closure through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The deliverable quality controls concern a review procedure regarding the contractual requirements of the project, the content, substance and structure/appearance of the texts (see Quality control of deliverables).

8.3 Quality control of deliverables

WPLs will be responsible for ensuring that the agreed deadlines for submitting the deliverables are met. All deliverables, including communication materials, will be discussed and approved by the PMG at the partner meetings.

The official project template will be used for all deliverable reports. The use of the deliverable template is mandatory for all deliverable reports.

Project deliverables will follow a multi-stages review procedure in order to maintain the highest level of quality. Most of the deliverables will undergo internal peer-review. One partner, chosen



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from the consortium based on their experiences and skills, will be assigned as reviewer. The reviewer should evaluate the deliverable according to 2 categories:

Category A: General Comments

- Layout/ Visual standards
- Flow and overall quality of the writing
- Language features (spelling errors, punctuation errors, typos or incorrect use of English)

Category B: Specific Comments

- Correspondence to project objectives
- Relevance and coverage of the topic
- Methodological soundness
- Quality of achievements

The process for deliverables reviewing is as follows:

- Once the deliverable is finalized by the working team, in its pre-final version, it will be forwarded to the corresponding WPL and to the partner/reviewer.
- The partner/reviewer will revise the deliverable and sent it back to the corresponding WPL, responsible for integration of comments.
- The deliverable in its final draft version will be forwarded to the Project Coordinator for review and feedback.
- Finally, the Project Coordinator will submit the deliverable to the EC Funding and Tenders Portal.

All deliverables need to be finalized before the contractual delivery time foreseen at the Grant Agreement, to allow time for quality review.

Concerning reporting, WPLs will be responsible for preparing reports covering WP progress, deliverables, milestones and compliance with the plan. TC will have final responsibility for editing the final report and taking care of its distribution. TC will also re-evaluate human resources using information received from partners. Progress of the tasks will be reported in terms of percentage of completion and estimated time to completion, as well as in terms of resources spent and expected.

Table 3: List of deliverables

Deliverable No	Deliverable Name	WP No	Lead Beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due Date (month number)
D1.1	Project Guidelines Document (PGD)	1	HCMR	R — Document, report	PU— Public	2
D1.2	1st Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure	1	HCMR	R	SEN – Sensitive	6
D1.3	2nd Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure	1	HCMR	R	SEN	18



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Deliverable No	Deliverable Name	WP No	Lead Beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due Date (month number)
D1.4	3rd Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure	1	HCMR	R	SEN	30
D1.5	Progress Report (PR)	1	HCMR	R	PU	34
D1.6	4th Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure	1	HCMR	R	SEN	42
D1.7	5th Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure	1	HCMR	R	SEN	54
D1.8	6th Yearly Report on cumulative expenditure	1	HCMR	R	SEN	66
D1.9	Audit Report	1	HCMR	R	PU	72
D2.1	Technical & Data Management Plan	2	NCC	R	SEN	6
D2.2	Surveys' Inventory	2	HCMR	R	PU	36
D2.3	Marine Biodiversity Hot-spots inventory	2	HCMR	R	SEN	48
D2.4	Preliminary proposal for marine areas to be included in the N2K network	2	NCC	R	SEN	48
D2.5	Preliminary SSCOs & Management Guidelines for the candidate offshore N2K sites.	2	NECCA	R	SEN	60
D3.1	Conservation plans	3	UAegean	R	PU	58
D3.2	Climate change impact assessment on Marine Biodiversity	3	NOA	R	PU	48
D4.1	Replicability and Transferability Plan	4	NECCA	R	PU	6
D4.2	Integrated Monitoring Plan	4	NCC	R	PU	36
D4.3	Marine Conservation School (MSC) GPGs	4	NECCA	R	PU	48
D4.4	After-LIFE Conservation Plan	4	HCMR	R	PU	60
D5.1	Leaflet & Banner/Beach flags & T-shirts	5	UoC	R	PU	12
D5.2	Guide book	5	UoC	R	PU	24
D5.3	Videos	5	MEDASSET	R	PU	24
D5.4	School toolkit	5	HCMR	R	PU	36
D5.5	Layman's Report	5	HCMR	R	PU	60
D5.6	Web-page	5	UoC	R	PU	9
D6.1	Extract of the project data from the LIFE KPI web-tool	6	HCMR	R	PU	9
D6.2	Extract of the project data from the LIFE KPI web-tool - final	6	HCMR	R	PU	72



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8.4 Quality control of the project

Data Management

Special attention will be paid in data management issues (quality assurance procedures, data storage, use of fair data, open data platforms). The Data Management Team (DMT) coordinated by HCMR, will be responsible for the collection, organization and management of all field data (telemetry, aerial, oceanographic data as well as population and other data by the target species monitoring in colonies and nesting sites), based on existing big data storage platforms (e.g., LIFEWATCH, OBIS) and taking into consideration ethics for open and FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable) data access. The DMT will be responsible of producing the Data Management Plan (DMP) for the project. The plan will be updated annually. The DMP will contain information on the suggested policies, standards, and sustainability activities related to the created data tools and services, to ensure the management of knowledge in the project is maintained following the FAIR principles. The DMP covers the data, documents and solutions created within the project. It describes the data and metadata standards, availability, curation and preservation methods. The main short-term aim of the knowledge created in this project is to benefit decision makers by providing robust services and tools.

8.5 Critical Risks and Risk Management

Early identification of potential risks to the project, will help PMG to plan possible mitigation strategies for reducing the likelihood of the risk and limiting their impact.

Risks that might affect the progress of the projects, including inability to achieve overall project objectives within defined cost, schedule, and technical constraints, are critical to be addressed.

Each WPL and WTL will report to the Project Coordinator any possible risk that may affect key elements of the project and the accomplishment of the objectives properly and in time. In these cases, the PMG will establish plans to reduce the impact of risk occurring.

Possible significant risks have been already identified at the planning stage in terms of the likelihood of each risk occurring and their possible impact on project elements and risk-mitigation measures have been defined to be carried out should a specific risk occurs. The table will be monitored and updated on a regular basis by the Project Manager in collaboration with the TC.

Table 4: Critical risks and risk management

Risk	Impact	Probability	WP	Proposed Mitigation Measures
Project management does not ensure the timely implementation of the actions and the smooth coordination between the partners	High	Low	1	The coordinating beneficiary and project partners have significant experience on management of large-scale multi-partner projects. A Project Management Group and a number of working groups are foreseen for the smooth project implementation. Buffer times to deal with potential risks or possible delays will be included in the timetable of the project.
Poor communication	Medium	Low	1	An open and dialectic approach will be applied in all



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Risk	Impact	Probability	WP	Proposed Mitigation Measures
flow between the partners				the PMG meeting whereas correspondence and communication will be promoted and ensured by the APM assisted by the TC to sustain and steer communication flows.
Delays in permitting processes	Medium	Low	2	The project does not include any complex interventions demanding time consuming permitting processes (e.g., EIAs or other similar permits). In any case the participation of NECCA & ISPRA in the project partnership will fast track the process for any required permit.
Unfavorable weather conditions delay the implementation of field work	Medium	High	2	Access to project sites could be difficult in case of rough seas, but the project consortium has a vast experience in working in such an environment. If so, the foreseen activities will be carried out more intensely during suitable conditions. Additionally, careful operational planning of the fieldwork will allow to address any delays due to bad weather conditions.
Failure of some of the experts and stakeholders to sufficiently engage with the project	Medium	Low	4	Most of the experts and stakeholders will be directly engaged from the start of the project by actively participating in the actions and the testing and evaluation of the DST and the other main outputs of the project. The participation of NECCA & ISPRA, as project partners, ensures the active involvement of the stakeholders related to the management of the N2K network. More particularly, NECCA is the national agency responsible for the management of the N2K network. The site managers of Natura sites, i.e. the staff of the Protected Areas (PAs) Management Units, are structurally members of the staff of NECCA, therefore their participation is ensured. At policy level, NECCA cooperates directly with the Ministry of Environment and Energy and supports it both in the field of planning and policy making, as well as in the management of the protected areas through the PAs Management Units. The Ministry of Environment will be directly involved in the designation of the new marine N2K site, as it is the competent authority. Its commitment is clearly stated in both relevant letters of support. The case is similar in Italy, where ISPRA, according to its institutional mandate, cooperates directly with the Ministry for the Environment for the management of protected areas. A number of other key players have already expressed their will to actively participate in the project through their letters of support. Therefore, the risk of poor stakeholders' engagement is very low. In any case, the project includes several networking, policy and communication actions which will further mitigate any



Risk	Impact	Probability	WP	Proposed Mitigation Measures
				relevant risk arise during the implementation of the project.

8.6 Key Performance Indicators

At the beginning of the project, the Project Coordinator together with the Project Manager and the TC will propose a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) with which to measure project results. KPI targets will be reviewed during the first 6 months of the project and will be later used to monitor the achievement of project outcomes and strategic objectives over its duration. The TC will be responsible for updating the information to the WTLs, while BCs, together with the APM and TC, will be in charge of project monitoring and reporting.

9. Green Procurement Guidelines

The Green Procurement Guidelines (GPG) is a Guide on Green Public Procurement (GPP) aiming to facilitate the use of GPP procedures for (a) equipment/consumable purchase and use in the project, (b) office operation and (c) implementation of project actions.

9.1 Benefits of Green Public Procurement (GPP)

Implementing Green Public Procurement (GPP) can effectively decrease the environmental impact of public activities by encouraging the market to produce more environmentally friendly goods, services, and projects.

The benefits of GPP can be summarized as follows:

- Contribute to specific environmental goals and objectives – for example, reductions in CO₂ emissions, energy efficiency and conservation of natural resources.
- Contribute to significant cost savings, particularly when considering the life cycle costs of the products.
- Lead to an increase in trust among citizens, businesses, and civil society towards public administration.
- Encourage innovation and support the development of competitive green products and services and expand the respective markets.
- Create healthier working conditions for staff.
- Develop the capacities and skills of public organizations to respond to future environmental and resource problems.

9.2 Use of the Green Procurement Guidance document

This good practice guide is optional and aims to support Green Public Procurement. It does not prevent any public authority from using national approaches or approaches that it has developed for GPPs.



While the good practice guide for GPP is not a replacement for national laws and international standards, it provides optional guidance for procuring authorities. Nonetheless, the contracting authority must follow EU and national procurement regulations during the procurement process. Additionally, the procuring authority is accountable for choosing the suitable "green criteria" from the options presented in this guide.

In the context of adopting "green practices" in the stages of the implementation of the Project, general guidelines for good practices that the partners of the Project can use in the directions of Green Public Procurement Guidelines are included. The above mentioned presupposes the integration of environmental criteria during the purchase of equipment and consumables for the LIFE Project, the integration of environmental criteria entering contracts and implementing practices that follow the life cycle cost logic (LCC), such as the goods and services selection based not on the lowest price but on the most advantageous economic offer based on environmental performance and financial parameters.

When establishing GPP criteria, referring to national and international technical standards is essential. In this framework, the National Green Public Procurement Action Plans can offer helpful guidance and set national targets for Green Public Procurement criteria.

This "good practices" guide aims to provide useful criteria for implementing actions in the LIFE Project. It draws on helpful information from European GPP guidelines, best practices for integrating "green" standards in European public contracts.

The efforts for reducing the environmental impact concerning the beneficiaries' office operation and equipment and consumables purchase are based on "Green Public Procurement. A collection of good practices" (EU, 2012) and "Buying green! A handbook on green public procurement" (EU, 2016).

9.3 GPP in the LIFE Project implementation

In the context of the LIFE Project implementation, the integration of ecological features is sought through the implementation of Green Public Procurement to the extent that this can be realized. Given that the contracts that will be conducted by the public bodies participating in the Project are specific and concern the implementation of particular actions, a selection of criteria and good practices that can be used in the Project are made.

The Project will prioritize specific criteria categories for use in public contracts of its entities. These categories apply to supply contracts for purchasing equipment and consumables and service contracts. Also, the Project partners will spread the good practices of Green Public Procurement in the operation of the office and in the actions of the Project, where this is possible to reduce the carbon footprint in all stages of the implementation of the Project.

Public bodies can incorporate as many of the following criteria as they wish into their contracts. The guidance is indicative and derives from the EU Green Public Procurement Guidelines and is included in the GPP Toolkit. For more information, operators can refer to the following website from where they can derive specifications of "green" criteria to incorporate into their contracts depending on the supply category.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu_gpp_criteria_en.htm



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Good practices in the implementation of project actions:

1. Most of the project coordination meetings will take place through teleconference to reduce the need for travel and the actual cost of the relevant actions. A special procedure will be organized by the project manager for the PMG and other project team coordination meetings.
2. The project will be archived in electronic form to reduce the use of paper and plastic filing products.
3. All of the project's scientific papers and documents, e.g., scientific papers and documents, will be stored electronically in adobe portable format (PDF) and in the meantime on an Internet Storage Service. These documents will be accessible to all the project's partners, project staff and auditors so to eliminate energy consumption of data transfer and storage in paper archives.
4. The carbon footprint due to trips will be reduced since the majority of communication and meetings required for project management, communication and monitoring will be held by telecommunication i.e., e-mail or teleconference meetings.
5. All of the project publications will also be available in electronic form through the project's website for viewing and downloading by the interested public. Maps, brochures and other information dissemination material will be available to download to mobile phones and laptops and other portable devices.
6. Efforts will be made to carry out multiple field actions simultaneously during the same field trip in order to minimize carbon footprint created by field work.

9.4 IT Equipment and consumables purchase and use

The IT Equipment category encompasses desktop and portable computers, monitors, printers, photocopiers, fax devices, scanning devices, and multi-function devices (multi-machine). To promote energy efficiency, the EU has created an agreement that requires central government departments to purchase IT equipment that meets Energy Star standards.

The criteria for PCs, laptops, and monitors are categorized into one group. The Core Criteria apply to any contracting authority and all Member States, and they tackle the primary environmental impacts. These criteria are designed to require minimal verification effort and avoid additional costs. The Core Criteria for PCs, Laptops, and Monitors are focused on incorporating technical specifications on energy consumption since it has the most significant environmental impact. Additionally, the Basic Criteria include straightforward criteria related to the product's lifetime. These lifetime criteria have been selected based on the EU EcoLabel, the Blue Angel, and the Nordic Swan.

For those looking to purchase top-notch products, having detailed criteria is crucial. These criteria may entail extra verification processes or a slight bump in cost compared to other products that offer the same functionality.

The Detailed Criteria comprise numerous additional components, both in the specifications and during the award phase.



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Power Management function for the equipment itself

- Noise Emissions
- The use of mercury in the back-light of liquid crystal displays (LCD)
- The disassembly of the equipment
- Recycled materials and recyclability
- The use of flame retardants in plastic parts with specific risk phrases (carcinogenic, mutagenic or harmful to reproduction) in plastic parts

Computer and Monitors categories include:

- Desktop Computers
- Monitors
- Keyboards (when they are part of the PC)
- Power supplies (when they are part of the PC)
- Laptops
- Imaging Equipment: copiers, printers, scanners, fax machines and multifunction devices. (when they are part of the PC)

The criteria to be used are those defined by the available GPP criteria proposed by the EU: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/criteria/office_it_equipment.pdf (version 2023).

Good practices for IT Equipment and consumables purchase and use:

1. The office equipment purchased will be certified by “Energy Star” whereas networks and relevant servers will operate by green technology, e.g., desktop computers will be equipped with the “eco-button” technology.
2. All printers purchased should have duplex printing capability to reduce paper consumption.
3. When possible, the products will be purchased by local suppliers or via internet-based vendors in order to limit the carbon footprint emitted by visiting traders in their shops.
4. Recycled paper is recommended to be used for document printing (100% recycled and totally chlorine free for plain/copy paper, sustainably harvested virgin fibers (e.g., FSC certified) for colored paper).
5. The consumption of paper will be reduced by reusing paper for notepads and double-sided copying. All used paper will be recycled.
6. Toner and ink-jet cartridges for the printers will be recycled.
7. The IT equipment will be switched off when not in use (e.g., after working hours), including printers and monitors.
8. All the obsolete IT equipment will be donated for re-using to NGOs or recycled.
9. All desktop computers will be equipped with the “eco-button” technology.

For more information, bodies can refer to the link below.



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<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/toolkit/computers%20and%20monitors/EL.pdf>

9.5 Office operation

Concerning office operation, the following product categories are included:

1) Photocopier & writing paper, 2) Stationery, 3) Printer Supplies, 4) Light bulbs, 5) Space heating/cooling, 6) General room cleaners, 7) Household paper

Photocopier & writing paper

The criteria to be used are those defined by the available GPP criteria proposed by the EU.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/toolkit/paper_GPP_product_sheet_el.pdf

Stationery

The "Stationery" category includes pencils, pens, rulers, erasers, markers, chalks, paper clips, pins, paper cutters, glue (eraser) and more.

Light bulbs

Indoor light bulbs must be replaced with energy class A or B equivalents.

Also, the criteria to be used are those defined by the available GPP criteria proposed by the EU.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/criteria/indoor_lighting_el.pdf

General room cleaners

The following product categories are included:

- General-purpose cleaning products, personal hygiene products
- And products for cleaning windows.
- Detergents for domestic (or similar) dishwashers
- Liquid dish soap for washing dishes by hand.
- Laundry detergents and detergents for household washing machines.

The criteria to be used are those defined by the available GPP criteria proposed by the EU at the link below:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/toolkit/cleaning_product/el.pdf

Household paper

It is proposed to use the environmental criteria of the EU Ecolabel in the case of toilet-cleaning paper. However, all products that meet Ecolabels type I and meet these specifications are accepted. For other uses (e.g. kitchen paper, paper towels, etc.), fully or partially recycled paper may be requested. More information at the link below:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32009D0568%2801%29:EN:NOT>



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Good practices in the use of printing paper and consumables:

All documents drawn up under the Project should be printed on double-sided paper.

The use of recycled paper should be adopted in all Project documents. Each document can include a reference that the paper used is recycled and that double-sided printing is recommended.

Bodies should contribute as much as possible to reducing the use of printing paper. For this reason, internal correspondence should be carried out by sending electronic documents, while the deliverables of the Project should be printed only when required.

Unused stationery should be recycled in special trash cans for recyclable material as provided.

Used printer consumables will be collected and recycled in special trash cans for recyclable material.

Good practices in the use of lighting and space heating:

1. The light bulbs to be purchased under the Project should use energy-saving technology. The use of LED technology lamps is recommended.
2. The staff should switch off lighting in workplaces when natural lighting is sufficient and when leaving rooms and all the IT equipment and lights will be switched off after working hours.
3. In the offices stable temperature will be preserved during the heating season (eight hours for four months), while the heating or cooling devices will be switched off after working hours. The indoor temperature will be monitored through electronic meters, in order to make the necessary adjustments if necessary.
4. Employees should turn off heating/cooling devices to save energy when leaving the workplace.

9.6 Monitoring of the GPP in the Project

While it is not mandatory for public bodies to incorporate green practices in their contract procedures (GPP), it is highly desirable to adopt such practices during the implementation of Project actions. Therefore, it is recommended to establish a process to monitor the integration of green practices in the Project.

Public bodies should keep a record of contracts that include "green criteria" and all contracts executed within the Project. They must report the Green Public Procurement implemented during the reporting period. They may also provide approximate quantitative data in specific categories and a comparison with the non-adoption of the corresponding Green Public Procurement in the report.

Example: The body chooses to purchase 500,000 sheets of recycled paper from 100% recycled paper fibers on which it prints with the possibility of double printing and uses all the paper for the Project. By the end of the Project, it will have saved 500,000 pages from double-sided printing and will have used 500,000 pages of recycled paper instead of plain paper.

All Project partners will prepare Green Procurement assessment reports for the use of best practices in the aforementioned issues during the reporting period.



10. References

- European Commission, 2012. *Green Public Procurement. A collection of good practices.*
- European Commission, 2016. *Buying green! A handbook on green public procurement.*



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