

Project acronym - Project title

HARMONY - Armonizzazione Italo-Maltese per un buono stato dell'ambiente: integrità dei fondali ed interazione con le specie invasive per preservare il funzionamento degli ecosistemi marini

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| Programme priority Axis | 3 Protecting the environment and fostering an efficient use of resources | |
| Programme Investment Priority | 6d) Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soils; promoting services for ecosystems, even through Natura 2000 and green infrastructure. | |
| Investment priority specific object |  | 3.1 To contribute towards the arrest of the loss of terrestrial and marine biodiversity in the area, maintain and reactivate the ecosystem and the protected area |

Project Lead partner

Università degli Studi di Palermo - Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra e del Mare

Project Partners

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| Partner 2 | Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale |
| Partner 3 | Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - Istituto per lo studio degli impatti Antropici e Sostenibilità in ambiente marino |
| Partner 4 | Regione Siciliana Dipartimento della Pesca Mediterranea |
| Partner 5 | University of Malta Faculty of Science/ Department of Geosciences |
| Partner 6 | Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change |
| Partner 7 | Environment and Resources Authority Environment Directorate/ Biodiversity Unit |

| Project duration (months) | Start date | End date |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| 36 | 28.02.2018 | 27.02.2021 |

Project summary

HARMONY addresses the problem of the progressive loss of marine biodiversity, the deterioration of the health status of Mediterranean marine ecosystems and the arrival of non-indigenous species due to anthropogenic impacts (e.g. increase in nautical traffic), impoverishment of natural resources, activities trawling and not least climate change.

The project harmonises the measures of monitoring the state of integrity of the seabed and the species that populate it and controls the effects caused by the fragmentation of habitats in the spread of non-native species (NIS) in the central Mediterranean.

On a 100 sq. km marine area affected by the presence of marine protected areas (AMP) Pelagie Islands and Capo Gallo, from the Sites of Community Interest (SCI) Seabed of Capo San Marco, Seabed of the Island of Capo Passero, Fil-Bahar Grigal ta ' , Fil-Bahar Bejn Rdum Majjiesa u Ras ir-Raheb and of the special protection area (SPA) Strait of Messina the project applies control measures for the protection of biodiversity.

These measures make use of early warning indicators and sensors identified in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive: typology analysis, abundance, biomass and extension of biogenic substrates; extension of seabed exploited by human activities; presence of vulnerable or resistant species; multi-metric status and operation indices; proportion of number of individuals and biomass of macrobenthic organisms and length/weight relationship; parameters of the size spectrum of the benthic community.

On the identified sites and marine areas, the project applies uniformity criteria that develop EDRR (Early Detection & Rapid Response) common monitoring and control actions, install a biomimetic sensor with high spatio-temporal resolution and monitoring networks based on participatory methods.

Project results

A Joint action plan for biodiversity protection regarding 100 sq. Kms of protected sites

Project results

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 Inventory of cross-border biodiversity in Natura 2000 sites and Habitats ✓ 1 Technical guideline to improve and harmonize the seabed integrity management processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 141 protected sites where to apply common policy management tools useful for improving monitoring and control systems of the integrity of the seabed and of not indigenous species (NIS) ✓ 1 awareness campaign for the correct use of protected areas |
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| Budget del Progetto | ERDF Contribution | National Contribution | Additional Co-financing |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| €1.613.608 | € 1.371.566 | € 242.042 | € 54.696 |
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