

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

1. Overall context/background/geographical scope

IP itself

Overall context/Background

A major responsibility and a national priority: The aim of the integrated project (IP) is to implement the priorities set out in the Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for Natura 2000, defined by France in April 2013 according to article 8 of Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive (HD). It focuses exclusively on marine natural habitats listed in the Directive. Marine waters in metropolitan France are home to a remarkable diversity of habitats, including eight of the nine marine natural habitats of Community importance. Seven of them (habitats 1110, 1130, 1140, 1150, 1160, 1170 and 8330) can be found in two biogeographical regions: the Atlantic and Mediterranean marine regions. Only habitat 1120, Posidonia beds, is found in the Mediterranean marine region. This habitat, along with coastal lagoons (1150), are priority habitats. France has an important responsibility for all these habitats due to its representativeness in terms of area and the presence of elementary habitats (sub-habitats in the directive) on the limits of their distribution ranges.

A coherent network: The French Natura 2000 network's sea area has significantly expanded since 2008. The network includes 158 partial or full marine sites designated under the Habitats Directive (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)), which currently cover 25,850 km², i.e. roughly 35% of territorial waters. The marine Natura 2000 network was assessed in biogeographical seminars, and the coastal marine habitats were judged to be sufficient but reef habitats insufficient (1170). To address this insufficiency, knowledge acquisition programmes were conducted and a network of offshore sites is under designation (see maps in form B2b) to achieve a sufficient network in 2017.

Favourable conservation status not achieved: In the context of the assessment carried out in 2012, in accordance with Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, the conservation status of the 8 habitats of the marine Mediterranean region and the 7 habitats of the marine Atlantic region has been characterized. Only the conservation status of the reef habitat in the Mediterranean has been assessed as being favourable, which means that marine habitats are a priority. These periodic assessments are coordinated by the UMS Patrinat, now linked to the French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB), and which, as the national reference for nature, supports the Natura 2000 network implementation process.

Figure 1: conservation status of marine habitats in France according to the 2012 assessment

Habitats		Atlantic marine	Mediterranean marine
1110	Sandbanks slightly covered by sea water all time	U2 (-)	U2 (-)
1120	Posidonia beds (<i>Posidonion oceanicae</i>)		U1 (=)
1130	Estuaries	U2 (=)	U2 (=)
1140	Mudflats/sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide	U1 (=)	U2 (-)
1150	Coastal lagoons	U1 (=)	U2 (=)
1160	Large shallow inlets and bays	U2 (x)	U2 (=)
1170	Reefs	U1 (x)	FV (=)
8330	Submerged or partially submerged caves	XX	U1 (=)

Legend

Conservation status	Trend since 2007
U2 Unfavourable-Bad	(=) Stable
U1 Unfavourable-Inadequate	(-) Deterioration
FV Favourable	(+) Improvement
XX Non assessed	(x) Non assessed in 2007

Gradual implementation of management at the national level: Following the designation process, site management is gradually gaining momentum and relies on three pillars:

- The establishment of steering committees (COFIL) and documents of objectives (DOCOB), which form the governance body and management plan for each site. The State chairs the steering committee (COFIL) for marine sites and can appoint one of the members representing a territorial authority as the chair if the surface of the site is in majority terrestrial.
- Charters or Natura 2000 contracts to carry out the action plan foreseen by the DOCOB.
- The Natura 2000 appropriate assessments of the implications to prevent habitats and species of community importance from damages.

Some sixty managing organisations are in charge of concrete implementation of Natura 2000 sites (writing the DOCOBs and the management phase) and are concerned by the IP. Regional departments for Environment, Planning and Housing (DREAL) are the decentralised offices of the Ministry for Ecological and Inclusive Transition (MTES) and coordinate regional implementation of Natura 2000. A network contributing to the dynamics of French Marine Protected Areas: According to French law¹, Natura 2000 sites with a marine part are Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and are included in broader policies concerning MPAs in France, in particular the national strategy for the creation and management of MPAs (2012-2020).

Shared challenges at the European level: the biogeographical kick-off seminar organised by AAMP for France in 2015 on the management of marine Natura 2000 sites helped determine the next management steps required to achieve the objectives of the network. Although situations differ from country to country, all Member States still have work to do when it comes to management, and sharing experience will be essential as they progress. The fitness check carried out by the European Commission in 2016 has concluded that the Nature Directives are fit for purpose and requires further technical and financial efforts for their implementation.

¹ Law n° 2006-436 of 14 April 2006 related to national parks, marine natural parks and regional natural parks

Those conclusions are particularly relevant for the marine part which was later developed. Furthermore, the involvement in the public consultation carried out during this process was the highest in the European Commission history, clearly expressing the utmost importance of nature conservation for the European Society.

Expected contribution to good environmental status and integrated maritime policy: In keeping with the new definition of good environmental status (EU decision 2017), the Natura 2000 network must bring an increasingly clear and significant contribution to the objective of good environmental status for marine waters of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). One of the objectives of the IP is to create or improve synergies between these directives, as well as the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Under the oversight of the MTES, Ifremer and AFB coordinate MSFD work, with the involvement of UMS Patrinat.

In implementing these directives, marine environmental issues in other European policies also need to be taken into account. These include the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) framework Directive. Many collaborative initiatives have already been established with maritime stakeholders in order to preserve marine ecosystems through solutions that are compatible with marine activities. This project and its complementary actions are aimed at improving these collaborations.

A recent national review and a new law for biodiversity: The implementation of Natura 2000 in France was the subject of a 2015 report by the General Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development (CGEDD) and the General Council for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (CGAAER), of which relevant recommendations for the marine part have been considered for the IP.

The French Act for restoring biodiversity, nature and landscapes, also known as “Biodiversity Act”, was adopted on 8 August 2016². It has established the French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB), which has become operational on 1st January 2017. It also clarifies the framework for the appropriate assessments of the implications applicable to professional fishing activities given their particularities, it includes provisions for user fees for maritime activities, which will then be used to fund marine biodiversity and it clarifies the process to transfer data issued from impacts studies.

Why an integrated project on marine habitats?

The decision to dedicate an IP to the marine environment, and more specifically to habitats, was made jointly by the organisations responsible for implementing the PAF (MTES Department of Water and Biodiversity and now AFB [formerly the *Agence des aires marines protégées* - AAMP and the natural heritage service of the *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle* – MNHN]). This decision considers the responsibility of France in addressing the European challenges related to marine environment protection and stems from a desire to support the development of the recent marine Natura 2000 network, which is still in the early stages and far from reaching its conservation status objectives. There are considerable gaps in knowledge about the marine environment and the effects of activities, which means that they cannot be taken into account properly. The goal of the integrated project is to act as a catalyst and coordinate efforts to move forward in this area.

Furthermore, when it comes to marine habitats, there is currently a lack of the type of collective scientific and technical collaboration that exists for species of Community importance (seabirds or marine mammals). These species are already covered by several international cooperation projects with management scales that correspond to their degree of mobility. The high involvement of stakeholders in the proposal preparation and the commitment of beneficiaries have strengthened this decision. However IP actions will naturally be carried out in coordination with species objectives, and in many cases will help achieve them.

A collaborative project: The IP proposal's current format has arisen from a series of technical workshops and informal discussions with maritime stakeholders: a national workshop (100 participants), three marine subregions workshops (150 participants) and two MPA managers workshops from the Mediterranean and Atlantic biogeographic regions (respectively 40 and 70

² Law n° 2016-1087 of 8 August 2016 for restoring biodiversity, nature and landscapes

participants). The concept note proposal was also opened up to public consultation and stakeholders have been involved in the development of the technical forms.

The integrated project will take place over 8 years and two months and will include one 26-month phase and three two-year phases. This will allow a complete reporting cycle to be included (in accordance with Article 17 of the Habitats Directive).

Geographical scope

The geographical scope of the integrated project and complementary actions is the network of marine Natura 2000 sites of the Habitats Directive across Metropolitan France (158 sites, see maps in form B2b). The sites concerned belong to two biogeographical regions: the Atlantic marine region (98 sites) and the Mediterranean marine region (60 sites). It entails 18 sites, considered as “terrestrial” but designated for the conservation of coastal lagoons and which represents major stakes for this marine habitat. In addition, there are sites beyond territorial waters that are currently in the process of being designated.

Over 34% of **territorial waters** within 12 nautical miles are protected by the Natura 2000 habitats network.

0.75% of the **exclusive economic zone** (EEZ), which stretches out from 12 to 200 nautical miles from the coast, is covered by the Natura 2000 Habitats network pending the newest designations.

Project themes, current situation and gaps

For this IP, nine work themes meeting the nine operational objectives (defined in Section 2) have been identified. They are described in the sections 1.context/ 3.actions/ 4.expected results of the B1 form following the same numbering.

1. Natura 2000 network’s management and governance and coordination of maritime and maritime-related policies → Objective 1

In terms of management, of the 158 sites, roughly 30 will not have a DOCOB on 1 January 2018. Fifteen of these DOCOBs should be validated in 2018. DOCOBs will also need to be written for future offshore sites.

A methodology for developing management plans for protected areas (marine and land) is currently being finalised in France. It applies to Natura 2000 and management plans revision. Despite preliminary efforts on the topic, there is a lack of a general framework identifying priority issues (habitats or species) in each biogeographical region (Mediterranean and Atlantic) and define long-term objectives on these scales.

The marine environment is currently managed by numerous governance bodies. The French Environmental code provides for the synergies between MSFD and the HD and a maritime steering committee, within the French State, was created and expanded in 2016 in order to organise the articulation between those two directives.

Within the Natura 2000 network, each site must have its own DOCOB and COPIL³, with the exception of sites located within marine nature parks, where the management plan and management committee fulfil these roles.

The recent European Commission report on the implementation of Nature Directives (SWD(2016)473) states that the French model has enabled “remarkable progresses” regarding acceptability of Natura 2000 in France. This model is resource consuming and requires further effort because few tools have been developed to support these bodies, and no assessment has been made of the effectiveness and representativeness of governance mechanisms in decision-making.

The governance LIFE+ PAPL (recreational seafood hand harvesting) project coordinated by AFB has generated useful experience for improved management of recreational seafood hand harvesting, based on innovative local and national governance. The project has worked on open governance which led to the creation of informal discussion bodies. The informal bodies now support the work of governance bodies responsible for managing MPAs and regulating this activity.

Regarding the land-sea interface, French law distinguishes primarily land or primarily marine sites based on a surface area criterion. The CGEDD-CGAAER report recommends improving

³ Decree no. 2008-457 of 15 May 2008 pertaining to Natura 2000 sites and amending the Environment Code

the adequate consideration of the ecological stakes irrespective of the terrestrial or marine nature of the site.

From an evaluation perspective, France is working with the IUCN to develop the Green List, a new standard that attests to the quality of management and governance of protected areas. The beneficiaries of the IP are contributing to these efforts and to adapting the strategy to the marine environment. Of the first five French certified protected areas, three are MPAs. However, the system has yet to be applied to Natura 2000 sites.

2. Capacity building and support tools → Objective 2

The AAMP (now AFB) with the support of sites managers spearheaded the development of a “toolbox” aimed at capitalising on information about managing Natura 2000 sites (DOCOB, measures, indicators). For now, this toolbox is mainly used internally and needs to be developed, completed and updated. It also needs to be centralised and made fully available to the network of stakeholders.

The *Atelier technique des espaces naturels* (ATEN, now AFB) has set up a coordination platform for this network of players, providing joint tools, guides and training workshops has been incorporated within the future “Resource Centre” department of the AFB.

There is strong and recurrent demand on this topic from the network of MPA managers. At the national level, managers come together within the MPA forum that meets annually, and annual meetings are also held for both biogeographical regions addressed by the IP.

New knowledge, the creation of new sites and their early management stages have led to changes in the way the Habitats Directive is understood. The MNHN is therefore revising the HD reference document, the Coastal Habitats Manual, which was written in 2004 and provides detailed descriptions of different marine habitats, in conjunction with the revision of the EUNIS typology. The work entails collaboration with the scientific community, sites managers and the main sea users.

Numerical data and information systems management are essential tools for the implementation of the policy and is part of large projects management. The beneficiaries are already deeply involved in the issue: the national MPA database and the National Inventory of Natural Heritage are managed by the AFB. The Inventory includes various data related to protected areas, fauna and flora, of which marine habitats that have been incorporated recently. Ifremer is in charge of the streaming portal for MSFD related data, the monitoring data of the marine part of the WFD database (Quadrige) and the marine environment marine and coastal geographic data infrastructure (Sextant). Last, a Natura 2000 Information System (Natura 2000 IS) has been developed by the MTES and opened in 2017). This system, interoperable with existing databases and taking into account marine specificities, will be the unique and centralised database for management and monitoring of the Natura 2000 network. Furthermore, feedback is necessary in order to fully optimise all the data collected and facilitate the integration of future data. There is currently no common methodological framework for regularly updating habitats mapping.

3. Integration of marine users and activities → Objective 3

In 2015, participants to a national survey about MPAs answered that the main criterion of MPA success is acceptance and recognition by stakeholders, prior to the achievement of the ecological objectives.

The application’s procedure of Natura 2000 in France reflects the intention of providing a management close to grass-roots level to ensure understanding and acceptance at the local level in the interest of optimal implementation.

Numerous activities can interact with marine habitats, such as marine gravel extraction, renewable marine energies, fishing and aquaculture, dredging and piling activities, port development, defence activities, nautical events, recreational boating, snorkelling and scuba diving. When these activities take place within a Natura 2000 site, they are generally subject to appropriate assessments that must be carried out by those in charge of the project. DOCOBs also include an economic and social diagnosis that identifies activities that take place on the site and their approval by the steering committee favours an integrated approach. However management is still too recent to assess and take into account social and economic impacts and up-to-date frequentation studies is a recurrent need for sites managers. Some developments are required and have to be organised in parallel with management measures and requires an organised framework.

The MSFD as well provides guidance at the national and marine regions levels and a few methodological frameworks exist, but they still need to be implemented locally, in particular within Natura 2000 sites. For instance, considering marine extraction, the French MSFD marine action plans entail an objective of “reducing the impacts on subtidal benthic habitats by limiting the marine extractions and adapting extracting techniques in accordance with the environment’s sensitivity”. At the national level, a methodological guide for creating orientation documents for sustainable management of marine gravel was coordinated by the MTES Department of Water and Biodiversity and recently finalised (2016), in consultation with stakeholders. An information system specific to these activities is also planned.

To support the management of activities within Natura 2000 sites, technical and economic background documents were prepared jointly by managers, scientists and stakeholders to be used as reference regarding: commercial fishing, aquaculture, marine sports and recreational activities and defence-related activities. That being said, due to the youth of the marine Natura 2000 network and the marine environment idiosyncrasies, this collective expertise is still in progress.

There is currently not enough reference information available to be able to properly assess the potential impact of these activities. Furthermore, data from these studies and from monitoring impacts is not centralised, but the “Biodiversity Act” provides for setting up a natural heritage inventory and requires projects developers to transfer their data.

In terms of integration of stakeholders, the Life + PAPL also demonstrated that open governance a project enables higher involvement.

Last, the ecosystems services concept can help consultation and decision-making processes with stakeholders, however due to its holistic approach, its use requires in-depth study. AAMP (now AFB) and IFREMER participated in one of the first projects aimed at studying marine ecosystem services in the prospects of MPA management, the Interreg VALMER project, but the application to the Natura 2000 context requires further work.

4. Conservation actions and mitigation of pressures on marine habitats → Objective 4

In the marine environment, mature environmental engineering technologies for restoring environments are generally rare and conservation actions focus mainly on eliminating pressures. Moreover, knowledge on how activities affect habitats is sometimes lacking. Within the framework of the MSFD, about 80 pressure/habitat pairs requiring further studies have been identified and 3 reference areas have been put in place to assess these interactions (e.g. extraction and sandbanks).

The AFB-UMS Patrinat (formerly MNHN) has carried out an assessment project on the sensitivity of marine benthic habitats to anthropogenic pressures, based on bibliographic research and consultation with experts. The final results of this research will be available in the first half of 2017.

The MSFD programme of measures (PoMs) involves the creation of strong protections within MPAs in areas of remarkable biodiversity, as provided for in the national MPA strategy.

Appropriate assessments are an essential tool for preserving habitats and for project leaders as mentioned previously. They are carried out systematically and are therefore a major source of information and expertise, but are little shared or capitalised on, and compliance with recommendations made after these studies is rarely monitored. Finally, there has been little work to characterise cumulative effects on the conservation status of marine habitats, but a national project (Carpediem) has been created to address this and work is in progress in the context of the MSFD/PoMs implementation.

The management of Natura 2000 sites in France relies heavily on a contractual approach. Charters, in particular, use a commitment-based approach to reconcile the pursuit of conservation objectives and activities in a pragmatic way. The charter exonerates signatory organisations from appropriate assessments. The use of these tools is insufficient among marine sites and at present, it has so far proved difficult to share charters between different sites.

One recurring issue is protection from the impacts of ship anchors on habitats, in particular yachts and in some places large yachts. The organisation of anchorage is one of the actions planned in the DOCOBs of many sites and in the MSFD/PoMs. Pilot projects on low impact anchorage have been carried out for small vessels and exploratory studies have been carried out for large yachts.

The removal of large debris (shipwrecks, lost fishing gear, cables and ineffective artificial reefs) is also planned for several sites. However there are no set methods for these potentially costly actions.

Awareness-raising actions are one way of reducing pressures associated with some activities. They are frequently mentioned in DOCOBs, since they can be more efficient than regulatory measures. It applies to professional users but it is also relevant to disseminate best practices concerning recreational activities, which are not subject to the appropriate assessments and can represent a significant number of people practising the activity, such as pleasure boating, seafood hand harvesting, snorkelling and scuba diving.

5. Assessing conservation status → Objective 5

The periodic conservation status assessment is based on experts' judgment as it cannot rely on a monitoring network within Natura 2000 sites, which is not structured yet. Site managers are not always able to establish monitoring and assessment methods as well as conservation status indicators differ or have not necessarily been defined for all habitats. Efforts have begun to structure this work, as part of the MSFD monitoring programme (MP) for which AAMP is the coordinator for benthic habitats and the sea floor.

In 2007, AAMP began an initiative to develop an MPA "dashboard" in order to assess the individual effectiveness of MPAs and contribute to the national assessment of the network. The tool is developed during the implementation of management in each marine park, and now in nature reserves thanks to a partnership with *Réserves naturelles de France* (RNF). It is a reporting and management support tool, whose scientific results are reported in a summary document made available to governance bodies to help orient management choices towards priority issues. The implementation of this approach to Natura 2000 has proven successful for few pilot sites, however there are not enough resources and tools to apply it to the entire network.

In terms of assessment tools, RNF has developed the natural heritage observatory for waders, which relies on the MPA network and operates as the reference system for Birds Directive and MSFD. RNF is currently working on extending the observatory to intertidal benthic habitats and their functionalities.

The knowledge about impact of conservation actions is also very limited. This is mainly due to the fact that management measures are recent and not yet very numerous. But the implementation of measures foreseen by management plans will require impact assessments.

6. Communication, dissemination and citizen involvement → Objective 6

In 2014, "Les Français et la mer", a survey coordinated by AAMP showed that 42% of the population in metropolitan France had heard of Natura 2000 and that the Natura 2000 policy suffered from a negative image. The large number of stakeholders involved in the marine Natura 2000 implementation process and a lack of national communication in setting up the network contributed to the situation. A communication strategy for marine Natura 2000 has been initiated but has not reached operational phase.

Regulatory information is available but the format is not adapted to a broad audience and the objectives of the policy are currently unclear and require reformulation. New information and communication technologies in particular are not widely used.

Besides communication, citizen science projects help involve the public and a few existing projects address marine intertidal habitats. However citizens are generally not given the opportunity to become actively involved in marine habitat conservation projects.

Educational managed marine areas, an initiative launched in the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia is currently being adapted in Metropolitan France. These maritime areas are located near the coast and are managed using a participatory approach in partnership with schools.

7. Financing → Objective 7

As things stand, the resources allocated to marine Natura 2000 are not optimised for achieving objectives based on the approach in place in France. Furthermore, there is no business model for coordinating the various available funds and no long-term funding mechanisms for the network as a whole, in addition to the AAMP resources. The efficiency of the policy has become a priority but cost/benefit approaches have not been used yet to assess the appropriateness of the means developed to meet the objectives of the directive.

The "Biodiversity Act" includes provisions for user fees to be paid to the AFB for some maritime activities and for them to be higher when these activities are carried out within MPAs.

In 2015, an attempt was made to introduce anchorage fees but never came into effect due to a lack of consultation with the stakeholders involved.

8. International cooperation → Objective 8

The kick-off biogeographical seminar on the management of marine Natura 2000 sites led to follow-up actions in terms of cooperation. In particular, the management methods for marine habitats, natural heritage shared by all Member States, are not sufficiently shared or pooled.

Cooperation projects such as MAIA or PANACHE have led to technical cooperation between Member States, but the lack of a permanent technical body limits continued dialogue.

On maritime borders, coordination is lacking when it comes to cross-border environmental issues and joint management actions are rarely carried out between neighbouring sites.

France participates actively in discussion bodies on MPAs at the European level and under the OSPAR and Barcelona Regional Seas Conventions, which are appropriate platforms for disseminating the results of this type of project. However, these working groups are not sufficiently used for implementing Natura 2000 despite the fact that many contracting parties to these conventions are concerned by this directive and that sharing experience benefits everyone.

In the Mediterranean, the MedPAN network gathers MPAs managers and notably aims at facilitating experience sharing, capacity-building and the implementation of joint management actions. In France, around ten Natura 2000 managers as well as the AFB are members of the network.

AFB has contacted the coordinators of current Nature Integrated Projects with a marine component.

9. Project management and environmental responsibility → Objective 9

AFB is the coordinating beneficiary of a LIFE+ Project (2013-2017, €4 M) and since 2010, AAMP (now AFB) has been involved in 18 projects that have received European funding: international cooperation, research, engineering, fisheries management and maritime spatial planning. Project management tools and training programmes have been developed and are used in-house and with partners.

Associated beneficiaries, in particular IFREMER has also extensive experience of European projects.

The IP has already been the topic of a planning exercise during a management seminar for the AFB directors team and a workshop has been organised internally simulating the project management of the IP, in order to plan out how the future organisation will work and, if necessary, adapt the organisation to the needs of the project.

Regarding environmental responsibility, AFB has developed its own strategy based on the experience of the former AAMP and ATEN. AFB also supports the environmental responsibility framework of Natura 2000 land and marine site managers. The strategy relies on performance indicators and regular assessments to progress towards exemplarity.

Complementary actions

Context and background

Since the law on the modernisation of territorial public action and on the strengthening of metropolitan cities of 27 January 2014⁴, regional councils have become the management authorities for the ERDF and the EARDF. In France, 8 coastal regions are involved in the management of funds for marine Natura 2000 projects. Europ'Act, a national technical assistance programme managed by the *Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires* under the authority of the Prime Minister, is a key tool that supports management authorities to help them use funds properly. The State is jointly responsible for the use of ERDF, EARDF and EMFF funds in France. Governance is carried out by a State region committee responsible for overseeing all programmes and funds.

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

In France, the EMFF management authority is the *Direction des pêches maritimes et de l'aquaculture* (DPMA), within the Ministry for Food and Agriculture (MAA). The Operational Programme of France was approved by the European Commission on 3 December 2015 for

the 2014-2020 programming period (Implementing Decision No C (2015) 8863 of 03 December 2015).

In accordance with the OP, the national measures of the EMFF that will contribute directly to Natura 2000 are measures 40 and 80.

- Measure 40 of the EMFF contributes to the reduction of fishing-related pressures on Natura 2000 habitats. It makes it possible in particular to support the conduct of risk analyses of professional fishing activities on Natura 2000 sites. These analyses are based on a methodology defined by the MNHN, in collaboration with the DPMA and in accordance with the appropriate assessment. This methodology has been validated on several pilot sites but has to be deployed throughout the network. This measure also makes it possible to support the implementation of the "fisheries" aspects of the socio-economic diagnosis of the DOCOBs, as well as to improve the knowledge of the interactions between fishing and Natura 2000 habitats. This measure finally makes it possible to support fishers' awareness projects to the stake of protecting marine habitats.

- Measure 80 may potentially finance any development and implementation of DOCOBs.

Furthermore, the objective of the measures 39 and 47 is to support innovative projects aiming at developing less environmentally impacting fishing and aquaculture practices. These measures will contribute in a more indirectly way to Natura 2000 policy by enabling the development of fishing and aquaculture gears or practices, less-impacting on marine habitats.

Eligible projects are selected on the basis of a scoring grid containing several selection criteria.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARDF)

The national framework has elements that are common to all regional rural development programmes in France for measures related to Natura 2000 and was approved by the European Commission on 30 June 2015. Actions are implemented locally by management authorities (regions). In France, the EARDF finances the management and operations on the intertidal part of primarily marine Natura 2000 sites. Regional departments of the Environment, Planning and Housing (DREALs) are key counterparts working with regional councils for the allocation of resources to Natura 2000, and may be responsible for assessing funding applications. The amount is foreseen for the 2018-2020 period of time.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The funding strategy is described in the operational programme for each region.

In France, the ERDF can finance the creation of DOCOBs and site management, particularly for mixed sites that are primarily marine. It has also funded INTERREG projects aimed at sharing knowledge and management methodology for marine protected areas between European countries (cooperation projects such as the MAIA and PANACHE, which concerned networks of MPAs in the Atlantic and English Channel regions, similarly to the MedPAN network in the Mediterranean region).

In 2015, in the Bay and Cape of Antibes and Lérins Islands Natura 2000 site in the Mediterranean, a marine environment restoration pilot project, was funded through the ERDF.

Among the 8 regional councils, managing authorities for this fund, only the Pays de la Loire council has explicitly targeted Natura 2000 at sea within its operational programme.

Currently, the use of these funds (EARDF and ERDF) for managing marine Natura 2000 sites is heterogeneous at regional level, which is not sufficiently taken into account in the overall strategy. Regional coordination is necessary and beginning to be organised in certain regions.

The amount is foreseen for the 2018-2020 period of time.

National fundings

Funding from Water Agencies

There are five Water Agencies along the two French marine biogeographical regions:

- Water Agency of *Artois Picardie*;
- Water Agency of *Seine Normandie*;
- Water Agency of *Loire Bretagne*;
- Water Agency of *Adour Garonne*;

Water Agency of *Rhône – Méditerranée - Corse*.

Their areas of intervention in the marine environment are independent from each other. Coastal Natura 2000 sites located at the mouth of river basins are under the direct influence of land-based discharge and under the WFD and MSFD. Water Agencies take part in achieving good environmental status of marine waters and their assessment (up to 1 nautical mile for biology and 12 nautical miles for physico-chemistry). They therefore support restoration and monitoring of marine habitats, sometimes developing innovative tools. In the Mediterranean, in addition to the monitoring of marine habitats, the Rhône-Méditerranée-Corse Water Agency is more invested, as it takes part in the Marine environment observatory (see: <http://www.observatoire-mer.fr/>) and its mapping platform MEDTRIX which provides access to data from habitat monitoring networks with the aim of estimating the quality of coastal waters. They also finance the app DONIA (see: <http://www.donia.fr/>), coastal development or other human activities impact studies on marine habitats of French Mediterranean coasts.

The Law for the Recovery of Biodiversity, Nature and Landscapes was passed on July 20, 2016. It reinforces the policy of the Water Agencies in favor of the restoration of the marine environments as a lever to the preservation of natural resources. This new law also offers an opportunity to broaden their interventions in a partnership framework to be drawn. The preparation of the XIth Programs (2019-2024) of the Water Agencies will be translated into the terms of the law. In fact, the links established with the Water Agencies have made it possible to articulate the work with the AFB between the WFD and the MSFD or the Habitat Directive.

Funding from the Water and Biodiversity Directorate of the Ministry for Environment (MTES)

The intervention of the ministry on Natura 2000 policy and biodiversity is managed by the "Landscape, Water and Biodiversity" program ("BOP113") set up to implement the national strategy for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is the support of the actions committed to preserve the biodiversity and the landscapes.

Funding from the "UMS flotte océanographique"

The French UMS oceanographic fleet refers to all the French naval assets belonging to the four founding organizations: CNRS (Scientific Research National Center), IPEV (French Polar Institute), IRD (Research Institute for Development) and the IP associated beneficiary IFREMER.

A demand from IFREMER for an offshore campaign (2019-2020) will be requested for the call 2019. The objective of the campaign is to acquire new data on offshore reef habitat with the aim at developing methodologies monitoring of deep habitats, and defining a monitoring strategy in line with the MSFD objectives.

Funding from the Agence Française pour la biodiversité (AFB)

The AFB continues the missions of the former *Agence des aires marines protégées* and is the national technical reference for the marine component of Natura 2000. The estimation of the permanent staff involved in Natura 2000 on the marine habitats of Community interest reaches 5 FTE.

The Récif' Lab project

The Récif' Lab project has been selected in May 2017 as part of the call for project for biodiversity conservation under the investment programme for the future of the MTES.

The project, which will be managed by the City of Agde, entails four subprojects which are not exclusively focused on the conservation of marine habitats of community interest.

Only one subproject is concerned by the complementary funds. It consists in setting up artificial "micro-reefs" for leisure scuba diving in order to reduce the pressure of this activity on coralligenous reefs. This subproject, in complement with the creation of the highly protected area planned in the Life IP, will contribute to the conservation of the reef habitat (coralligenous reefs).

2. Project objectives:

IP itself

The cross-cutting objective of the project is to achieve or maintain a favourable conservation status for marine natural habitats of Community importance. To achieve this while ensuring effective, equitable and transparent management, the integrated project has the following prioritised list of operational objectives:

1. Management and governance that facilitates coordinated implementation of the Natura 2000, MSFD and WFD directives while incorporating the connection between land and sea
2. Improved capacities and tools for implementing Natura 2000
3. Integration of marine users and activities
4. Effective, proven and disseminated conservation and pressure mitigation actions
5. Assessment of the conservation status of marine habitats on a biogeographical scale and monitoring devices for adaptive management
6. Appropriation by the society of the marine Natura 2000 initiative
7. Long-term future of the IP actions ensured through innovative financing mechanisms
8. Reinforced international cooperation
9. Optimised project management and responsibility from an environmental standpoint

NB: The objectives concern the "marine habitats" component of Natura 2000

Complementary actions

EMFF (*objectives are named as actions in the OP*)

- Implementation of risk analysis by fisheries on Natura 2000 sites and proposal of measures (measure 40)
- Implementation of the "fisheries" sections of the socio-economic diagnosis of DOCOBs (measure 40)
- Improved the knowledge of the interactions between fishing and habitats Natura 2000 (measure 40)
- Awareness-raising of fishers to the challenges of protecting marine habitats (measure 40)
- Natura 2000 contracts: concrete measures to maintain and restore habitats of Community interest (measure 80)
- Development and implementation of DOCOBs for primarily marine sites (measure 80)
- Innovations related to reducing the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on marine habitats (Measures 39 and 47)

EARDF

- Improvement of the conservation status of intertidal habitats
- Integration of issues affecting marine habitats in coastal local authority policies.

EMFF, EARDF, ERDF

- Improvement of the use of funds allocated to priority conservation issues
- Improvement of the Natura 2000 issues by the competent authorities who manage the complementary funds.

Funding from Water Agencies

- Improvement of the knowledge on marine habitats
- Improvement of the conservation status of habitats influenced by the quality of marine waters, and thus marine habitats
- Contribution to the assessment of the conservation status through participation in joint monitoring.

Funding from the Water and Biodiversity Directorate of the Ministry for Environment (MTES)

- Preservation of the Natura marine habitats
- Coordination and dissemination of the IP with other ministry departments, with regional and local departments (DREAL, DIRM, DDTM) and with other Ministries
- Coordination between policies (MSFD, WFD, Habitat Directive)
- Improvement of implementation of the PAF.

Funding from UMS French oceanographic fleet

- Improvement of Scientific research and observations at marine habitats.

Funding from AFB

- Improvement of Habitat Directive implementation (knowledge and management of the Natura 2000 sites) on marine habitats.

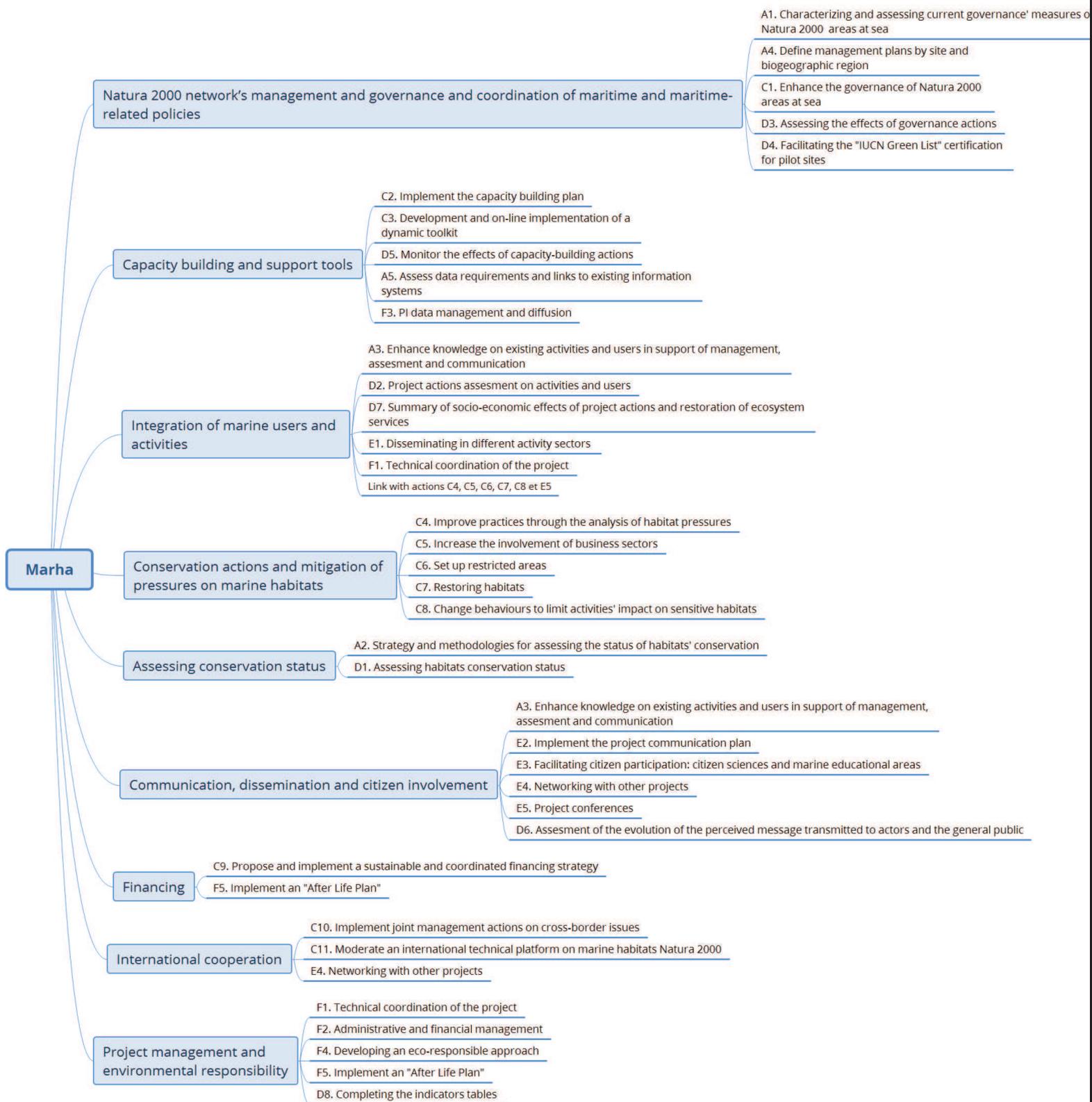


Figure 2: relationships between the work themes and the project actions

3. Actions and means involved:

Actions financed by LIFE:

The following sections include references to the PAF: measures (M) and pages (p).

1. Natura 2000 network's management and governance and coordination of maritime and maritime-related policies

→ Section C2, p10; M1, 4, 5, 8, 12, 19; p33, 35 and 37

In terms of sites and network management, action A.4 will perform the development of strategic management documents to frame and prioritise actions at the biogeographical level. Each document targets a habitat or group of habitats and a biogeographic region. It entails long-term objectives for the features and action plan to address the main pressures and assess the results. At the site level, the action will develop the DOCOBs that are currently missing as well as the DOCOBs for future offshore sites experimenting the new national method for protected areas management. The experiment will test an inter-site approach whenever possible. The means involved in the action are AFB staff and meetings, with the support of PNRA.

In terms of governance, the action A.1 will analyse the governance mechanisms from the outset of the project and propose recommendations for the implementation of pilot governance actions within the C.1 action. Pilot actions could entail good governance practices that have been tried and tested during the LIFE project on recreational seafood hand harvesting, testing of multi-site management, the integration of the environmental continuity between terrestrial and marine sites, synergies to improve coordination with other directives of activity sectors policy or forward-planning workshops. The assessment of the impact of governance action will be assessed within the D.3 action.

External assistance will be used to involve human sciences specialists (anthropology and sociology) in the analysis and assessment actions (A.1 and D.3) and to support the implementation of C.1 action. AFB staff will be involved for the coordination and uptake of results, and along with PNRA and PNRGM to inform about governance practices of Natura 2000 within Marine Nature Parks and Regional Nature Parks and to implementation pilot actions. A call for interest will be opened to implement pilot governance actions within sites not managed by beneficiaries.

As an overarching action awarding good management and governance practices, action D.4 will address IUCN Green List certification for SACs. Applications will be proposed by COPILs based on existing assessments of governance, social and economic impacts and the conservation status. IUCN support will be provided by external assistance and PNPC will experimentation the certification of SACs within the National Park's perimeter.

2. Capacity building and tools

→ M5, 12, 15, 21; p33, 35

Action C.2 will provide a wide range of trainings to Natura 2000 stakeholders (habitats conservation status, management planning, financing...) and networking actions. It will involve networks coordinators such as AFB, TDV and RNF, as well as topic specialists like IMA, GIS-P and sites managers (PNR GM and AFB marine subregions and PNM officers) and some external assistance.

An online dynamic "toolkit" will be developed in action C.3 to collect, compile and spread information on habitat built throughout the project: DOCOBs, feedback from actions carried out in Natura 2000 sites, assessment indicators on the conservation status or social or economic impacts and the updated Natura 2000 marine habitats manuals. AFB staff will frame and populate the tool, that will be set up by IT external assistance.

The impacts of capacity building actions will be assessed in the D.5 actions by AFB, TDV and with feedback from other beneficiaries involved in C.2.

A.5 for the definition of data management plans and F.3 for permanent support will help in storing and disseminating IP data. It will be done by feeding in priority national and international reference databases and participate for the marine part in the implementation of the Natura 2000 Information System. A full time data manager will be recruited for these

actions, IFREMER and PNRA will also be involved and IT external assistance will be used for the necessary developments.

3. Integration of marine users and activities

→ M4, 5, 8, 15; p33, 37

Actions A.3 and D.2 will be directed towards knowledge about marine users and activities and towards the impacts of the projects actions on those users and activities. Action A.3 will entail socio-economic inventories that have not been conducted in Natura 2000 sites, the methodology for building and updating this information and the definition of social and economic indicators. It will also address perceptions and representations of stakeholders to support management actions of the project. The actions will involve beneficiaries in charge of sites management (AFB, Agde, PNRA, PNRC and PRNGM) and external assistance for methodological support from human sciences specialists (geography).

The ecosystems services provided by habitats will also be analysed in A.3 by PNRGM and AFB in pilot sites and with CRNS and IFREMER for methodological support. Using the results as a consultation tool within COPIs when choosing management measures, will be tested.

D.7 will provide a synthesis of social and economic impacts of project actions and the restoration of ecosystem services.

Active collaboration with marine users and activities will be set up as part of actions C.4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 (see the following section), addressing the management of activities and the mitigation of pressures.

A dissemination action (E.1) will share best practices and promote networking between economic stakeholders in the various economic sectors. It will foster the preparation of common projects for the conservation of habitats (including scientific activities and research projects).

The involvement of those stakeholders will also be facilitated by the project conferences (action E.5), the local and subregions informal technical bodies (as part the action F.1 for technical coordination) and the steering committee of the project (F.1) which will work in an open governance format and welcome representatives from marine users and activities.

4. Conservation actions and mitigation of pressures on marine habitats

→ M4, 12, 14, 15, 19, 24; p33, 35, 37

Actions C.4 and C.5 will seek enhance compatibility between marine activities and habitats conservation through two aspects:

- creating reference areas to improve knowledge on habitat pressures, and address the issue of cumulative impacts (C.4);
- building tools: background documents, appropriate assessments database, charters and voluntary commitments mechanisms (C.5).

They will be performed by AFB staff (at various levels), beneficiaries in charge of site management for partnership with stakeholders (PNPC, PNRA, PNRC and PNRGM) and scientific support (IFREMER, IMA and GIS-P). Action C.4 requires in some cases nautical means. Action C.4 will address sites not managed by beneficiaries and both actions will benefit from external assistance for expertise and tools development.

Action C.6 will work on the creation of strong protection areas within Natura 2000 sites. It will test different approaches (opportunistic and more in-depths processes). AFB, Agde, PNRA and PNPC will be involved in the creation strong protection areas and AFB for spreading the implementation of such areas.

Action C.7 will develop planning and techniques for low-impact anchorage and signage/markers, jointly with local authorities and recreational boating organisations, particularly for large yachts (subaction C.7.1). Subaction C.7.2 will address habitat restauration through seabed clean-up actions (e.g. : large debris or eradication of invasive species). The action will address sites managed by AFB, PNPC, PNRA and PNRGM and sites not managed by beneficiaries through calls for interest. It will include external assistance and infrastructure work.

Actions C.8 will consist in awareness-raising actions to limit the impact of activities:

standardise these initiatives in terms of tools, methods and the content of messages. Study user perceptions and adapt the tools and content of these messages based on the issues and target audience. Most of the beneficiaries responsible for site management will participate in the action (AFB, PNPC, PNRA, PNRC and PNRGM) using a variety of means to test a wide range of methods such as nautical ones for the PNRGM. AFB will be responsible for the

dissemination of the tools to all SACs managers and the action will also be supported by external assistance.

5. Assessing the conservation status

→ M 4, 12, 15, 17; p33 and 35

All these actions are fully contributing to the MSFD monitoring programme. Habitats targeted and methods developed have been selected to fill gaps in terms of conservation status assessment and to fulfil priority management needs. Those gaps could be habitats or parameters to assess the conservation status such as structure and functions.

Action A.2 will produce preparatory work for improving the capacities to assess the conservation status of habitats. It will consist of four subactions:

- A.2.1: defining a monitoring strategy and build on data and expertise to update the habitat manual.

- A.2.2: developing methodologies, indicators and protocols for the assessment of Mediterranean habitats.

- A.2.3: developing methodologies, indicators and protocols for the assessment of Atlantic habitats.

- A.2.4: testing innovative techniques for habitat mapping and assessment (external assistance and research and development partnership will be used).

The action will also contribute to the definition of a methodological framework and strategy for the long-term acquisition of habitats knowledge.

Action D.1 is the consecutive action, to assess the environmental impacts of the projects actions consistently with the plan targeted by the IP, which means the assessment of habitats conservation status. The action will therefore develop monitoring throughout the network and it will also lead to the creation of dashboards for SACs and observatories for two habitats.

As assessment is the cornerstone of the directive, those actions will involve a large number of beneficiaries: sites managers for the test and implementation of monitoring and SACs dashboards (AFB, Agde, PNRA, PNRC, PNRGM), networks coordinators for the dissemination of assessment methodologies (AFB, TDV and RNF) and scientists for the methodological work and support to managers (AFB-UMS Patrinat, GIS-P, IFREMER and IMA). Among others, IFREMER will address deep-sea habitats. Important means, such as boats, diving equipment, ROVs will be necessary for those actions which will also require external assistance and will entail several meetings between managers and scientists for sharing practices and endorsing results.

All data acquired during those actions will be made available and will contribute to significant progress for habitat mapping and the understanding of conservation status by all stakeholders.

6. Communication, dissemination and citizen involvement

→ M4, 20, 21; p33, 37

A full-time communication manager will be recruited by AFB for the duration of the project to support the communication action E.2. All beneficiaries are engaged in this action to allow sufficient dissemination of their achievements throughout the project. The E.2 will develop a national communication plan for the habitats that can be adapted to local situations and directed to all Natura 2000 stakeholders and the general public. The strategy is to promote a fundamental message rather than a regulatory one and to combine different communication methods, including new information and communication technologies. Communication tools and devices will be made in-house and by external assistance. Action A.3 will support this action by providing background about how Natura 2000 is perceived and received by different audiences

The IP will directly involve citizen in the management of marine habitats through citizen sciences initiatives at site level (subaction E.3.1 with the participation of AFB, IMA, PNRA and PNRGM) and the creation of educational managed marine areas with schools (subaction E.3.2, same beneficiaries). The action E.3 requires field work and teaching skills, and will require external assistance to gain support from environmental education professionals.

In addition to the dissemination towards stakeholders (E.1) mentioned previously, the action E.4 will consists in networking with other relevant project at national or international level. Two networking meetings with Life projects will be convened: one with French Life projects and one gathering Life Nature Integrated Projects.

The project conferences (action E.5) will represent important milestones to spread the projects results to a wide audience. A kick-off conference will launch the IP and four conferences will be held at the end of each phase.

The effectiveness of the dissemination actions and in particular the link between Natura 2000 and the French society will be assessed on a regular basis by an initial study and several surveys (action D.6).

7. Financing

→ M 4; p37

The assessment of the Natura 2000 network's cost will be carried out to set up a financing strategy as part of action C.9. Economists from CNRS and IFREMER will carry out this assessment as well as cost/effectiveness analysis of measures for the conservation of habitats. A part-time financing manager (80%) will be recruited by AFB to ensure a good coordination with complementary funds, to identify new funding sources and to improve the integration of marine Natura 2000 stakes in the funding programmes, especially with the regional authorities (French regions) in charge of European structural funds. Innovative funding methods will be tested and the existing or future financing opportunities (taxes and fees) will be investigated.

This action will be a key component of the After Life plan (action F.5) to ensure long-term future of the project actions.

8. International cooperation

→ M 4, 21; p33, 37

The action C.10 will focus on local cross-border issues and support the implementation of joint management actions. The action will target 3 areas with proximity between SACs of two Member States and a wider area with a focus on a particular activity (large yachts). AFB staff (submarine regions or Marine Nature Parks officers) with the support of IMA for the Basque Country will run the action.

Action C.11 will support cooperation at a wider level by the moderation of an international technical platform on Natura 2000 marine habitats. It will be carried out by the organisation of thematic biogeographical seminars and experience sharing (methodologies, habitats data, communication tools, feedback on management). To this end, AFB will make use of existing fora such as Regional Seas Conventions ad hoc discussion groups and will inform about the project outcomes at annual meetings. Collaboration with the MedPAN network will also contribute to the dissemination of projects results. GIS-P will be partly in charge of a work cycle on deep reefs.

9. Project management and environmental responsibility

The technical and administrative coordination actions (F.1 and F.2) will be the two pillars of the project management.

The AFB will set up a coordination team made up with seven full-time and one part-time (80%). Six of them will be involved in the technical actions, the project manager will be fully dedicated to the technical coordination and the financial and administrative manager will be fully dedicated to the F.2 action (administrative and financial management). Ten local officers will be recruited by the AFB, within Marine Nature Parks and marine subregions branches, for the development of technical actions of the project.

All the technical actions and contracts will end up on the 30th of June 2025. Only the project manager, the financial and administrative manager and the communication manager are scheduled after this date and until the 31st of December 2025 to close the project and for the dissemination of its results.

The technical coordination includes regular meetings between beneficiaries (every 6 months) and an annual steering committee involving an open but representative set of stakeholders. It also includes local and submarine regions technical committees to disseminate projects results and involve stakeholders at those levels.

The technical and administrative management action (F.2) will be dedicated to ensuring a strict management of the project finances and matching with the technical aspects; and to meeting the requirements of the European Commission in terms of reporting. Regular support (training and tools) will be provided to beneficiaries.

To fulfil the objective of optimised project management and to have the ability to adapt to unexpected changes in the eight years period, all beneficiaries have planned significant resources in those two actions (F.1 and F.2).

The completion of indicators table will be done by AFB in action D.8.

The action F.4 will establish an environmental responsibility approach for the project and for voluntary stakeholders. All beneficiaries will be in charge of implementing eco-friendly acts and providing feedback. The carbon footprint of the project will be assessed.

The continuity of project actions being a common responsibility, all beneficiaries are also engaged in the elaboration of the After Life plan (action F.5). The long-term future of the project will be considered from early stages and several actions will produce after Life work plans or strategies.

Expected complementary actions

EMFF

National measures, requiring requests for funding from the Ministry (MAA):

- Implementation of risk analysis by fisheries on Natura 2000 sites and proposal of measures (measure 40)
- Implementation of the "fisheries" sections of the socio-economic diagnosis of DOCOBs (measure 40)
- Improved the knowledge of the interactions between fishing and habitats Natura 2000 (measure 40)
- Awareness-raising of fishers to the challenges of protecting marine habitats (measure 40)
- Natura 2000 contracts: concrete measures to maintain and restore habitats of Community interest (measure 80)
- Development and implementation of DOCOBs for primarily marine sites (measure 80)
- Innovations related to reducing the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on marine habitats (Measures 39 and 47).

EARDF

M 12, p35

- Elaborate the DOCOBs and manage the intertidal parts of mixed Natura 2000 sites
- Implementation of Natura 2000 marine contracts.

ERDF

M 12, p35

- Enhance the functionality of protected areas through appropriate management (5.2.2).

Funding by Water Agencies

M 2, 12, p 35

- Monitor the marine Habitats
- Monitor the quality of the water body in cooperation with other monitoring networks
- Participate in knowledge gathering and monitoring of marine habitats
- As part of actions carried out under the overseas WFD, participate in transferring harmonised protocols and monitoring
- Mediterranean marine habitat mapping (RMC Water Agency)

Funding from the Water and Biodiversity Directorate of the Ministry for Environment (MTES)

- Coordinate and disseminate of the IP with other ministry departments, with regional and local departments (DREAL, DIRM, DDTM) and with other Ministries
- Monitor the consistency between the priorities of the PAF and the actions of the IP during the IP.

Funding from UMS French oceanographic fleet

- Implementation of Scientific research projects and observations on reefs in the Bay of Biscay.

Funding from AFB

- Natura 2000 regular actions on habitats by permanent staff.

The Récif' Lab project

- Installation of artificial micro-reefs

In total regarding complementary funds, the amount of the national funds is 43.407 M€ and the amount of European funds is 5.585 M€.

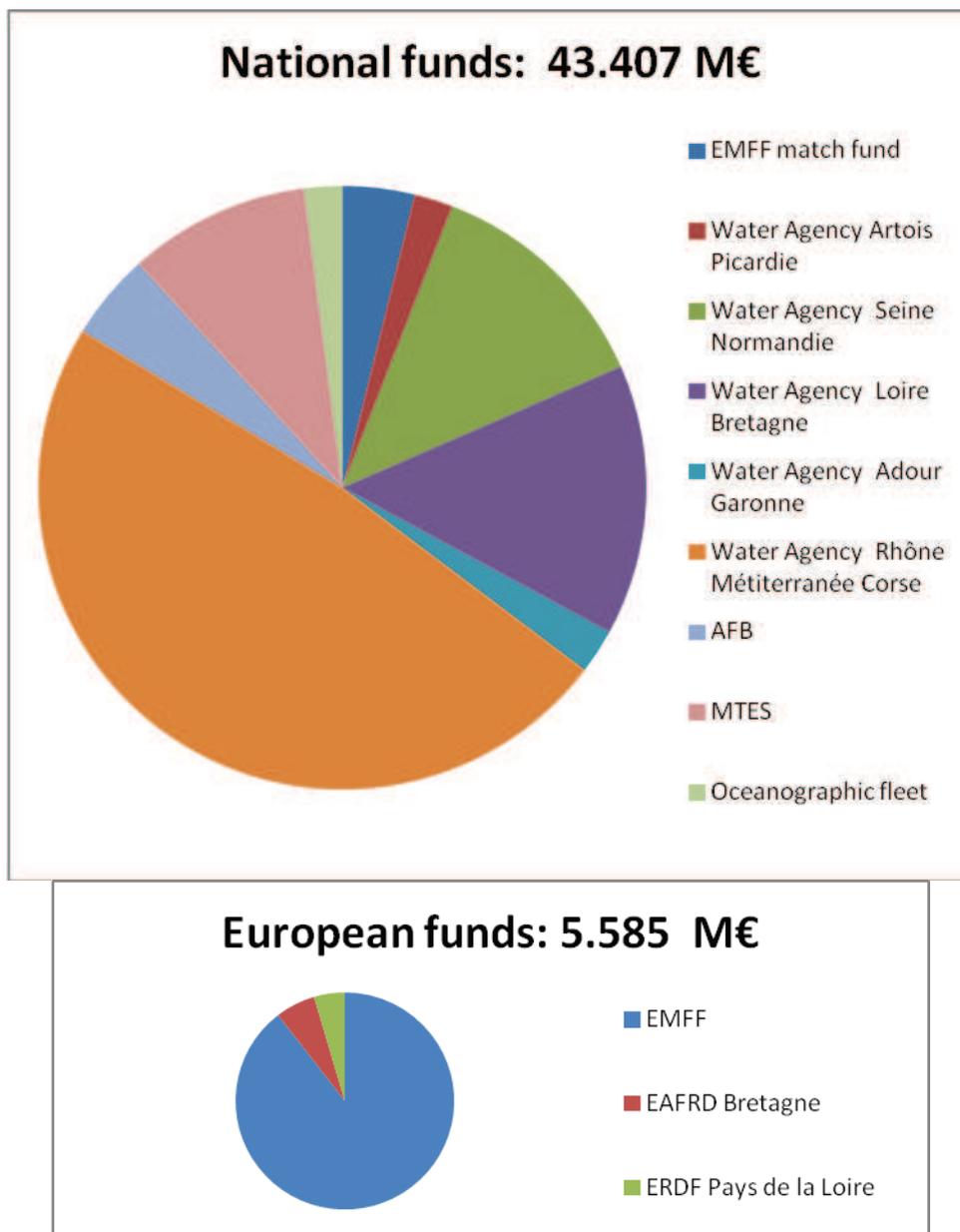


Figure 3 : Relative contribution of the complementary funds (national at the top, european at the bottom)

4. Expected results (main outputs and achievements, qualitative and quantitative):

Linked to Actions financed by LIFE:

The results expected at the end of the IP with respect to the cross-cutting objective is an improvement in the conservation status for all marine habitats by 2025 - with at least half the habitats having good conservation status, and no habitats having an unknown conservation status.

The result expected for 2040 is favourable conservation status for all habitats.

It is expected that the project will contribute significantly to the implementation of the Prioritised Action Framework and more specifically, to all the marine habitats actions being carried out. Furthermore, it is expected that the IP contributes in a transversal way to the management of terrestrial Natura 2000 sites.

In connection with the action themes presented in Section 3, the following results are expected:

1. Natura 2000 network's management and governance and coordination of maritime and maritime-related policies

The habitat section of the DOCOBs of 15 coastal sites and 10 offshore sites will be elaborated with a new methodology and validated by the COPILs. 18 strategic management documents for the biogeographic regions will be realised (A.4).

The governance of the network will be assessed, using a representative sample of at least 15 sites, 10 recommendations will be shared with the consulted stakeholders and 5 types of concrete actions proposed (A.1).

The governance bodies of Natura 2000 sites and the MSFD have increased capacities for marine Natura 2000 implementation. Governance methods will be tested and applied: for multi-site management, creation and informal bodies, citizens involvement and integration into other policies. 4 approaches aiming at improving governance effectiveness, will be tested and validated on the pilot sites. The attendance from stakeholders in governance body will increase. The decision-making by governance bodies will be facilitated. The effects of terrestrial activities on marine habitats will be better taken into account (C.1).

A methodology and a list of indicators will be established, and the impact of all governance actions will be assessed (D.3).

A methodology will be adapted for Natura 2000 sites and 20 SACs will obtain the "Green List" recognition (D.4).

2. Capacity building and support tools

The measure 21 of the PAF will be performed.

More than 3 000 will benefit from training and at least, with at least 100 participants from each of the following categories: maritime activities, local elected officials, local civil servants. The training materials are available online (C.2).

Marine habitats will have been integrated into the AFB resource centre and benefit from initiatives and dedicated coordination. An online "toolkit" for managing Natura 2000 sites will be made available. It will include reference information on habitats, the inventory of measures taken and their effectiveness, a catalogue of indicators, a map of the players involved in Natura 2000. The visitor number will increase to reach 5 000 per year in 2025. More than 100 contributions plus the updated marine habitats manual will be uploaded and shared with stakeholders (C.3).

The impacts of actions C.2 and C.3 on the capacities of stakeholders will be assessed, considering in particular the follow-up actions implemented (D.5).

Data management plans will be available and all data acquired during the project will be disseminated via national reference portals and made publicly available. Recommendations for data collection and spreading will be followed and interoperability with european databases will be achieved (F.3).

3. Integration of marine users and activities

The measure 2 of the PAF will be performed.

The knowledge and understanding of activities and users on Natura 2000 sites will be enhanced. Socio-economic diagnostics for 8 sites and socio-economic baselines for 3 sites prior to assessment will be realised. And at least 4 ecosystems services assessments, 3 activities monitoring studies and 5 perception studies will be carried out. A method for collecting social and economic information needed to manage the sites will be established (A.3).

The impacts of projects actions on users and marine activities are assessed in at least 12 in-depth case studies representing the range of project actions and in priority concrete actions.

The overall socio-economic impact and the restoration of ecosystems synthesis are analysed (D.7).

Relevant activity sectors have been involved in all actions of section 4 (C.4, C.5, C.6, C.7 and C.8).

2 forums "Natura 2000 and economy" will be organised and gather at least 100 participants each. More than 80 presentations of the project will be done in activity sectors bodies. And 3 new projects applications, representing over €2,000,000, will contribute to integrating Natura 2000 habitats of community interest into activity sectors policies (E.1).

At least 50 participants of the project conferences are marine users or representatives of activities. All steering committees are attended by representatives of marine users and activities.

4. Conservation actions and mitigation of pressures on marine habitats

The measure 21 of the PAF will be performed.

Pressures from activities will be reduced thanks to better knowledge of interactions between activities and habitats by the development of 15 habitat/pressure pilot areas, 3 technical innovations and recommendations for the management of concurrent effects (C.4).

Activity sectors will be involved in the update or development of: 11 technical and economic background documents for management, 30 experience feedback factsheets, a database for appropriate assessments, 10 best practices charters, 5 recognition systems for voluntary commitments and an adaptation of the Nature Regional Park brand for marine habitats; all available in an interactive format (C.5).

At least six strong protection areas for habitats will be set up in collaboration with stakeholders. They will enable achievement of favourable conservation status or improvement of the conservation status for a wide range of habitats: coralligenous reefs, maerl beds, seagrass beds, boulder fields, Atlantic subtidal reefs and posidonia barrier reefs (C.6).

Innovative anchorage solutions for different seized vessels will be approved and 300 anchorages will be installed. They will be deployed in partnership with the private sector for ensuring a long term use. The regulatory planning of anchorages will be performed in 10 areas and in two additional areas for large yachts. Innovative marking solutions will be installed and the technique will be disseminated to local authorities (C.7.1).

Experimental restoration actions will be performed on 10 sites representing various habitats and with a majority of subtidal habitats (C.7.2).

People who engage in marine activities will have the resources to improve their practices. The impacts of these activities on habitats will be mitigated and the perception of marine stakeholders will positively change in terms of habitats conservation. 300,000 people will be reached during awareness-raising campaigns. More than 5,000 people will use yearly several apps at the end of the project. 60,000 people will have visited the underwater trail (C.8).

5. Assessing the conservation status

An assessment strategy will be set up, encompassing all habitats or group of habitats of the two biogeographic regions. For each habitat, in combination with existing ones, conservation status indicators will be available and a common assessment methodology used. For relevant habitats, two levels of monitoring protocols will be available – reduced (for implementation by site managers) and enhanced (for experts on priority sites). Sites managers will be engaged in the development of assessment techniques. The most effective techniques for the long-term monitoring of habitats will have been identified and selected. Standardised methods for acquiring knowledge and disseminating data on marine habitats will be developed (A.2).

More than 250 local assessments would have been carried out during the project and an observatory for deep-sea reefs will be implemented at 1,000 metres depth. 75 sites managers will be involved in regular monitoring. The existing monitoring networks will be optimised and expanded and regular and long-term habitat monitoring will be established to meet the long-term obligations of the directives. The monitoring strategy will be shared by scientists and sites managers, more than 30 workshops will be held during the project. Resources will also be optimised for marine habitat monitoring by involving local managers whenever possible. Dashboards will be put in place in 20 SACs. Two habitats will incorporate the Natural Heritage Observatory which will be the MSFD monitoring tools for the concerned habitats. The 2024 assessment of the conservation status of marine habitats on a biogeographical scale will rely on conservation status monitoring within sites. And the impacts of the projects actions on the conservation status of habitats will be assessed (D.1).

6. Communication, dissemination and citizen involvement

The measure 20 of the PAF will be performed.

The perception of the marine Natura 2000 by stakeholders and the general public will improve. Knowledge and understanding of Natura 2000 will double during the project. 22,000 communication pieces will be handed out during the project, social media will involve at least 2,000 followers, 20 press clippings will be released annually, 10,000 habitats photos will be available, a project website and a local online coordination platform will be developed, 3 films will be produced for a wide audience and IP booths will be held in 50 events (E.2).

Three operational citizen science protocols will be available and 10 pilot sites engaged in the citizen science projects. A webpage dedicated to citizen science will be develop and receive

5,000 visitors. A "Citizen Science Day" will be organised and will gather 100 participants. the deep-sea observatory will have more than 10,000 visitors (E.3.1).

Based on the development of 35 educational managed marine areas and children's sea councils, the involvement of 1,000 pupils, the input of sustainable development education NGOs, an educational programme on marine Natura 2000 will be adopted by the French Ministry of Education (E.3.2).

As a result of the networking action, two interLife meetings will be held (one gathering IP Life). The project will be presented in 100 national meetings and 40 international meetings. Project presentation brochures will be available in French and English and an online platform for national projects on marine habitats will be developed (E.4).

Five project conferences will be organised, the number of participants will increase and all categories of stakeholders will be represented (E.5).

In terms of impacts of dissemination actions, an initial understanding of the perception or image of marine Natura 2000 and marine habitat protection issues among stakeholders and the general public will be available and two assessments of changes in these perceptions and image will be carried out. Two media content analyses on marine Natura 2000 and habitats of community interest will be performed (D.6).

7. Financing

The cost of the marine Natura 2000 will be known (human and financial resources from the various funds) and funding for the network will be planned out. The amounts estimated in the complementary actions will be used in full, the coordination of fundings between public policies will be improved and the use of different European funds for Natura 2000 will be optimised. The cost-effectiveness of management actions will be assessed. Three innovative funding methods will be tested and 2 continued in the long term. The long-term continuity of the project actions will be ensured by the funding plan (C.9) and by the After Life plan (F.5).

8. International cooperation

Knowledge on managing habitats in different Member States will be improved. In particular, the methodology for assessing the conservation status will be shared with Member States or other countries concerned.

One DOCOB and the site governance will be developed in a cooperative approach. Four joint action plans will be realised for the management of cross-border issues and joint management actions will be implemented (C.10).

Four biogeographic seminars will be organised including a work cycle on deep-sea reefs. An international page for the toolkit will be developed, including a page dedicated to sea fishing. Five management strategic datasheets targeting an habitat at the European level will be produced. 40 summary datasheets in English on the management or assessment of marine habitats will be shared (C.11).

9. Project management and environmental responsibility

Regarding technical coordination, the project will organise: 15 board meetings, 8 steering committee meetings, 80 local technical committees meetings and 16 marine subregion committees meetings. Except for board meetings, all categories of stakeholders will attend each meeting. It will contribute to make stakeholders aware of the progress made by the project and to seek equitable governance of the project involving beneficiaries and partners in decision-making (F.1).

On the administrative and financial aspects: all associated beneficiaries specifically will be trained on the financial aspects, an administrative and financial project monitoring tool will be operational, mandatory reports and payment requests will be supplied no later than 3 months after the end of each phase and audits will be performed on time. It is expected that the project will use of at least 99% of the designated budget and that facilitated project management and reporting for all beneficiaries, will help the implementation of technical actions (F.2).

The project will be exemplary from an environmental standpoint, all beneficiaries will meet annually on this aspect and will implement and report on eco-friendly acts. The project will have a lower environmental impact and encourage service providers to take environmental criteria into account in their proposals. The project's CO2 emissions will be known and the possibilities for reducing them will be identified and developed. A factsheet for the

implementation of an eco-responsible approach within a European project will be realised (F.4).

An After Life plan will be developed and validated together with stakeholders and methodological guides for transferability will be produced (F.5).

Linked to expected complementary actions

EMFF

- Implementation of risk analysis by fisheries on Natura 2000 sites and proposal of measures (measure 40)
- Implementation of the "fisheries" sections of the socio-economic diagnosis of DOCOBs (measure 40)
- Improved the knowledge of the interactions between fishing and habitats Natura 2000 (measure 40)
- Awareness-raising of fishers to the challenges of protecting marine habitats (measure 40)
- Natura 2000 contracts: concrete measures to maintain and restore habitats of Community interest (measure 80)
- Development and implementation of DOCOBs for primarily marine sites (measure 80)
- Innovations related to reducing the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on marine habitats (Measures 39 and 47).

EARDF

- The EARDF contributes to the management of intertidal parts of the mixed sites
- Use of the EARDF will be optimised and harmonised for intertidal area actions.

ERDF

- The ERDF contributes to the management of intertidal parts of the sites
- Use of the ERDF until consumption Natura 2000 area
- The functionality of protected areas through appropriate management will be improved.

Funding from Water Agencies

- The regular monitoring on habitats for the WFD is implemented
- The results are shared with the IP coordination team
- The XIth Programs (2019-2024) maintains the marine habitat monitoring actions on WFD.

Funding from the Water and Biodiversity Directorate of the Ministry for Environment (MTES)

- The National strategy for Biodiversity 2011-2020 is implemented and the next one will include the priorities for Natura 2000 marine habitats in accordance with IP results
- The PAF and actions elaborated during the IP are consistent.

Funding from the UMS French oceanographic fleet

- The marine habitat knowledge is improved for the reefs.

Funding from AFB

- All the Natura 2000 sites are managed in a harmonised manner.

The Récif' Lab project

- The conservation status of the coralligenous reefs improves.

5. Expected contribution to the implementation of the target plan/strategy

The PAF was elaborated in 2013 before the new funds programming, i.e. based on the EFF and LIFE+ funds. Some of the measures planned at this stage have now been carried out, including the inventories required for site designation, site designation itself, and the development of some of the DOCOBs. The appendix added in 2016 provides the updates for the marine part with respect to changes to the network and a description of the EMFF use. The measures identified in the PAF concerned by the IP aim at the finalisation of the DOCOBs for recently designated sites, the revision of implemented DOCOBs, site management, management effects and network assessments, communication, training, and awareness-raising.

At the end of the IP, all the measures for marine habitats will be carried out.

IP itself

The aim of the integrated project is to carry out the measures below for the “marine habitats” component.

- General priority measures for Natura 2000, page 33 of the PAF: M17; M5; M8; M20; M15; M19; M21
- Measures specific to marine and coastal Natura 2000, page 35 of the PAF: M12; M14; M24, M23.
- Priority measures for promoting innovative approaches related to Natura 2000: M4, p37.

Complementary actions

Complementary actions contribute to the implementation of Measures 5 (EMFF) and 15 (EAFRD), p33.

6. Main stakeholders involved in the project:

The main stakeholders involved in the project are the players responsible for implementing the PAF and Natura 2000 at sea.

As co-financer the MTES will be part of board of the project and will ensure continuous interaction. Other central and decentralised administration will be involved in the governance of the overall project at local and national level (through action F.1). They will be involved in governance (A.1, C.1 and D.3) and management actions (action A.4 for the DOCOB elaboration and actions C.4 to C.8) according to the activities they are in charge of. In particular for C.5 action and decentralised administration which can be authorities in charge of appropriate assessments. They will also benefit from capacity building actions (C.2 and C.3) and support tools (F.3). In terms of public establishments, the five Water Agencies will contribute significantly to the implementation of complementary actions and the *Conservatoire du Littoral* (CDL), as site manager, will be concerned by management actions and in particular by actions C.6 and C.7, due to the possibility for the CDL to assign parts of the maritime public domain and to manage it by agreement.

The marine users or their representatives will be involved in management actions, in actions related to knowledge about marine users and activities and the impacts of the actions on them (A.3 and D.2). In pilot sites, they will be involved in dissemination actions (E.1 and E.5), in governance actions and at the local and national level in the governance of the project (F.1). The fishing activities will be involved mainly in complementary actions and active collaboration will be continued with the regional and national Fisheries Committees to facilitate an integrated approach with other activities concerned by the project. The involvement of the private sector, including financial contributions, will be sought, in particular in actions: A.2, C.4, C.5, C.7, E.1 and E.2).

Calls for interest or wide spectrum actions will provide means to develop actions on sites that are not managed by beneficiaries: actions A.1, A.2, A.3, C.1, C.4, C.5, C.7, D.1, D.2, D.3, D.4, E.3. They will also benefit from capacity building actions and support tools as well as feedback from all actions and dissemination actions (E.2 and E.5). Local and marine subregions technical committees (F.1) will also enable involvement in the project. The involvement of network coordinators will also facilitate the dissemination toward sites managers.

In addition to the scientific and research competences among the beneficiaries, marine biology centres and universities will participate in ecology targeted actions (mainly A.2, C.4 and D.1). As well as consultancy firms, they could be contracted through external assistance and they will be involved within working groups. The project will rely on the working group for the “benthic habitats and sea-floor” component of the monitoring programme in order to ensure good coordination with MSFD. Scientific expertise will also be necessary for other actions (such as citizen science E.3.1).

Local authorities will be involved in governance actions and management actions according to their competences They will also benefit from capacity building actions and local technical committees.

Regional councils are counterparts for complementary actions and the use of the EAFRD and ERDF funds for managing marine Natura 2000 sites.

Environmental NGOs will be involved in awareness-raising (action C.8) and the citizen involvement (action E.3).

International counterparts (ministries and public establishments in charge of nature conservation, and local authorities) will be involved in actions C.10 and C.11. IUCN will contribute to the international dissemination and will be technically involved in the actions related to the Green List certification (D.4).

7. Long term sustainability (including capacity building):

Capacity building:

All the capacity building actions will contribute to the creation of a common culture for the implementation of marine Natura 2000 in France. This concerns training actions and the development of modern tools that can be shared and used by as many stakeholders as possible. Achieving a common culture will facilitate self-sustaining capacities and regularly produce trainers and ambassadors.

Citizen involvement:

The aim of citizen involvement is to give society the means to understand and take action for Natura 2000. By becoming a greater issue in society in the long run, Natura 2000 will gain momentum and be able to create leverage for its implementation, such as data acquisition to which the citizen science projects contribute. Action E.3 will develop action plans at the end of the project to continue relevant actions.

Assessment for effective management:

The high level of effort in monitoring actions (A.2 and D.1) and the development of dashboards for Natura 2000 sites is aimed at assessing the achievement of long-term objectives and facilitating decision-making and focusing priorities on conservation issues with the poorest environmental status at different levels, leading to better use of financial resources.

Financing:

One of the project objectives is to create long-term income sources to finance the management Natura 2000 sites. A part-time manager (80%) will be dedicated to the issue and to facilitate the integration of the topic into other policies and fundings. The project will seek to identify desirable, equitable and acceptable funding mechanisms. A user fee system for maritime activities (extraction, development, immersion, anchorage) or a fee for allocating maritime public domain to the *Conservatoire du littoral* could be tested.

Use of funds:

The IP intends to collectively improve the use of different funds that can contribute to the objectives of Natura 2000 by identifying various opportunities and pooling funding sources over the eight years of the IP. The IP will ensure that priority is given to business models that rely on a wide variety of funding sources.

Coordination, stakeholders and beneficiaries engagement:

By allocating a significant proportion of the budget to actions that support governance and coordination, the project must help optimise human and financial resources attributed to each public policy by promoting their results and sharing initiatives such as monitoring, wherever possible. Stakeholders have been closely involved in preparing for the IP and will be closely linked with the project. The IP pursues an objective of transparency, which is considered as a factor contributing to effectiveness and therefore sustainability. The commitment of beneficiaries also means a strong effort to be involved in the policy's implementation in the long run.

Transfer Natura 2000 into the economy:

By creating capacity building levers, the goal of the project is to strengthen its ties with the private sector and facilitate the inclusion of Natura 2000 in the strategies of different economic sectors, and therefore cover some of the costs through progressive changes to these activities.

8. Expected major constraints and risks of the:

IP itself

Institutional change:

The French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB) has been established on the 1st of January 2017. Efforts have been made to anticipate this change and to prepare the IP organisation. The managers committee has already planned the organisational structure required for the IP and a new preparatory meeting is scheduled prior to the project beginning. Furthermore, the other organisations (ATEN, ONEMA and PNF) that have been merged into the AFB have brought new competences particularly relevant for the project. Finally the MTES, which is the Ministry responsible for overseeing AFB, is one of the project's partners and is committed to providing continuous support to the project.

Improvement of the conservation status of marine habitats:

The cross-cutting objective of the project is to improve the conservation status of marine habitats. However, the ability to intervene in the marine environment is limited and the results of the project will depend on the effectiveness of actions and the time it takes for ecosystems to respond, which can be long and difficult to predict. Furthermore the conservation status depends on environmental factors such as climate change, which sometimes occur on a scale greater than that of the project. The project will seek to minimise these risks, particularly through the assessment mechanisms aimed at improving long-term monitoring at the site and biogeographical region levels and establishing conditions that will facilitate adaptive management.

The scale of the project, selecting actions:

One of the difficulties of these large-scale projects is the implementation of a large number of actions and thematics. To mitigate this risk, various competences have been gathered for the project and strong coordination will help in adapting in case the projects cope with important constraints.

Involvement and coordination of stakeholders:

One of the project's major areas of action is the coordination of stakeholders who can help implement Natura 2000. The success of the project therefore depends on the level of involvement of these stakeholders. The project will address this by allocating human resources specifically to these coordination issues at national, marine subregion and local levels, and through a number of actions aimed at facilitating the understanding and enabling the involvement of stakeholders. In its current formation, it is assumed that the project will enable implementing management of higher quality and therefore will provide mutual benefit for stakeholders and the marine environment.

Complementary actions

The European funds operate with programming periods which often cause transition difficulties between two periods. The IP beneficiaries have set up a close coordination with the managing authorities of the funds in order to anticipate and if needed alleviate the potential effects caused by those issues to the IP.

EMFF

The additional actions identified and covered by the EMFF are subject to a selection process. This is why the amount of EMFF that will actually be used to support these actions will depend on the purpose, eligibility and quality of the projects submitted and selected during the programming.

In addition, the operational program does not necessarily specify the amount available for Natura 2000 actions in articles which may include other subjects (e.g. measure 40) and / or indirectly contribute to Natura 2000 (measures 39 and 47). Regular information from the AFB will be organized by MTES in order to ensure the proper link between the EMFF and LIFE on actions contributing to the preservation of Natura 2000 habitats.

EARDF

The amount indicated in the financial plan of the MarHa IP is foreseen for the 2018-2020 period of time. The actions financed by EARDF will continue if they are being part of the next programming. The IP will ensure this continuity by taking part in the next programming

elaboration and the connection between the IP team and the regional council will be guaranteed.

ERDF

The amount of the ERDF as complementary fund is an estimate based on the marine SACs pro rata among the total protected areas (both land and marine ones). The use of this amount will depend on the quality of the projects submitted and their relation with the marine habitats. The IP will coordinate the Natura 2000 site managers and regional council of Pays de la Loire to support submission of good projects under this fund.

The actions financed by ERDF will continue if they are being part of the next programming (2021-2027). The IP will ensure this continuity by taking part in the next programming elaboration and the connection between the IP team and the regional council will be guaranteed.

Funding from Water Agencies

The Water Agencies are independent of each other. However all of them validated their actions in a Master plan for Water Development and Management (*Schémas directeurs d'aménagement et de gestion des eaux*) for 2016-2021. The total amount indicated in the IP financial plan includes the estimation until 2025. The Law on biodiversity launches debate on the Water Agencies involvement on the marine biodiversity and some of them may chose to implement restoration actions like implementation of lower impact anchorages. The coordination between the Water Agencies and the IP team will ensure that the actions won't be financed twice.

Funding from the Water and Biodiversity Directorate of the Ministry for Environment (MTES)

There are no specific constraints and risks for this financing.

Funding from the UMS French oceanographic fleet

The application for funding will be submitted in 2018 and the answer for the funding demand will be known in November 2018. The IP will be a real lever for the hosting of the application.

Funding from AFB

There are no specific constraints and risks for this financing.

The Récif' Lab project

There is a risk that the conservation status of the coralligenous reefs does not improve in case other pressures are more important than the scuba diving activity.

Level of security of the funds:

Except for the UMS French oceanographic fleet - *Flotte océanographique française*, all the funding presented in the proposal are secured, meaning that the corresponding budget exists and is allocated to thematics that are in line with the IP. Therefore there is a relatively high probability of materialising the actions. One of the risks is that the use of many funds is dependent on the submission on projects (EAFRD, EMFF and EMFF matching funds, French Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition ([MTES], Water and Biodiversity Directorate). However several projects are in preparation by sites managers and there is high confidence that the corresponding financial envelopes can be used for the conservation of marine habitats.

The funding by Water Agencies is highly reliable as the corresponding actions have been validated by their respective board in their pluriannual action plan. It should be noted that the current frameworks driving the Agencies go from 2016 to 2021. The funding has been estimated considering that the same amounts will be available in the period 2022-2025. This can be considered as a risk, however, since the promulgation of the biodiversity law in 2016, Water Agencies have integrated within their missions both the conservation of biodiversity and more responsibility in the marine environment. So that their contribution for the conservation of marine habitats (as well as other features) is supposed to increase in the mid-term.

A key aspect of the project is to allocate one person (part time, 80%) to the Natura 2000 financing issues and in particular the coordination of the different funds. This entails discussions with the relevant authorities to better incorporate the conservation of marine habitats in the future financing programmes and it is expected that those complementary

funds increase. Diversification of the sources to finance Natura 2000 will also be sought as part of this action, which should tend to reduce the overall risk.

It should be noted that regarding EAFRD and EMFF, only the current programme has been considered (until 2020) although those funds (of the ones which will follow-up) will likely contribute during the next period. In general, like for EAFRD and EMFF, a cautionary approach has been privileged for the complementary funds, excluding the funds which entail significant risks or which were not completely in line with the IP objectives. This also means that progresses could be made and that the complementary funding could be higher, which is expected through action C.9.

Summary of the level of security of the funds:

EMFF: high, the budget is validated and available for the work area. The use of the fund is only depending on the submission of relevant projects. Furthermore the amount should increase by 2025 since the next programming period has not been integrated.

EAFRD: high, same reason.

ERDF: high, same reason.

For the same reasons the level of security of the EMFF matching fund is high.

Water Agencies: high, as the budget and the work programme have been validated by their respective board.

AFB and MTES: high, as they are responsible for the implementation of Natura 2000 at sea.

Funding from the UMS French oceanographic fleet: low to medium as the funding is depending on a selection process for oceanographic campaigns. However, Ifremer is part of the board of the French oceanographic fleet and highly involved in the Life IP.

Récif' Lab project: high, because the project has been selected.

9. a) Is your project significantly climate related? Yes No

b) Is your project significantly biodiversity-related? Yes No

If you consider your project to be significantly climate or biodiversity-related (you marked 'yes'), please explain why:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA(S) TARGETED BY THE PROJECT

Name(s)/Definition of the project area(s):

The project serves the entire mainland French SAC network designated for the Habitat Directive, which mean for the habitats: 1110,1120,1130,1140,1150,1160,1170, 8330. It will be implemented both within the terrestrial waters and within the off-shore French waters.

This network covers the three marine French coasts “Channel & North sea”, “Atlantic ocean” and « Mediterranean sea», which fit with the MSFD marine subregions.

The French Natura 2000 network's sea includes 158 partial or full marine sites designated under the Habitats Directive (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)), which currently cover 25,850 km², i.e. roughly 35% of territorial waters. About 10 off-shore sites will be designated in 2017.

Complementary actions will be implemented in the same geographical area than the IP.

Location of the IP implementation

This network was chosen to implement the PAF because it corresponds to the French marine habitats component, as a whole. This nationwide area has been chosen because the IP needs to encompass all situations on the field:

- Presence of all habitats concerned by the IP.
- Representation of the manifold of human activities.
- Differences in terms of governance: overlapping of protection tools (Marine Nature Park, Regional Nature Parks, National parks, etc), cross-sites management, different type of management structures, etc.

The nationwide scale allows involving the manifold of stakeholders: scientists, users, nature protection associations, etc. The IP will implement actions locally all over the country to help stakeholder to ownership Natura 2000 issues.

This scale is consistent with the objective of making know Natura 2000 policy in France.

See the 5 maps

Map N°1: location of the Natura 2000 network.

Map n°2: location of IP beneficiaries along this network.

Map n°3 to 5 give some details by area on beneficiary sites: Celtic Sea/the Channel/North Sea; Bay of Biscay and Celtic Sea; Mediterranean Sea.

The complementary actions

The complementary actions will be localised in the area where the complementary funds are eligible.

1.nationwide for the EMFF as only the national measures have been include in the complementary actions of the IP

2.administrative regions:

There are 8 coastal administrative regions in France:

Channel and North sea:

- Hauts-de-France
- Normandie
- Bretagne (partly)

Atlantic ocean :

- Bretagne (partly)
- Pays de la Loire
- Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Mediterranean sea :

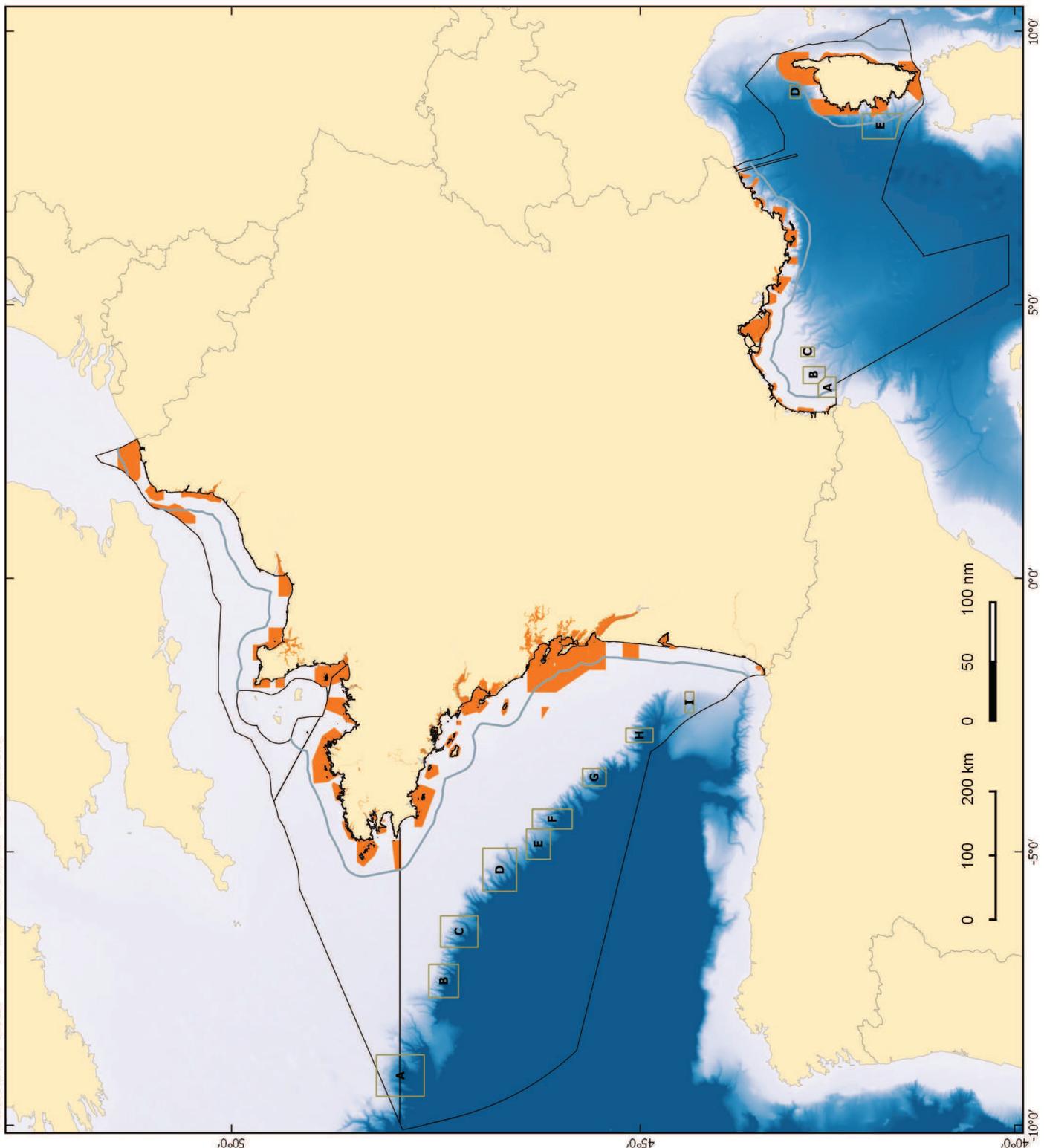
- Occitanie
- Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
- Corse

These regions are involved in implementation of operational programmes of the AERDF and ERDF.

3. The complementary actions by the Water Agencies cover the 5 hydrographical basins showed in Map N°6.

FRANCE
Natura 2000 > The Habitats Directive

EDITED: 18/4/2017

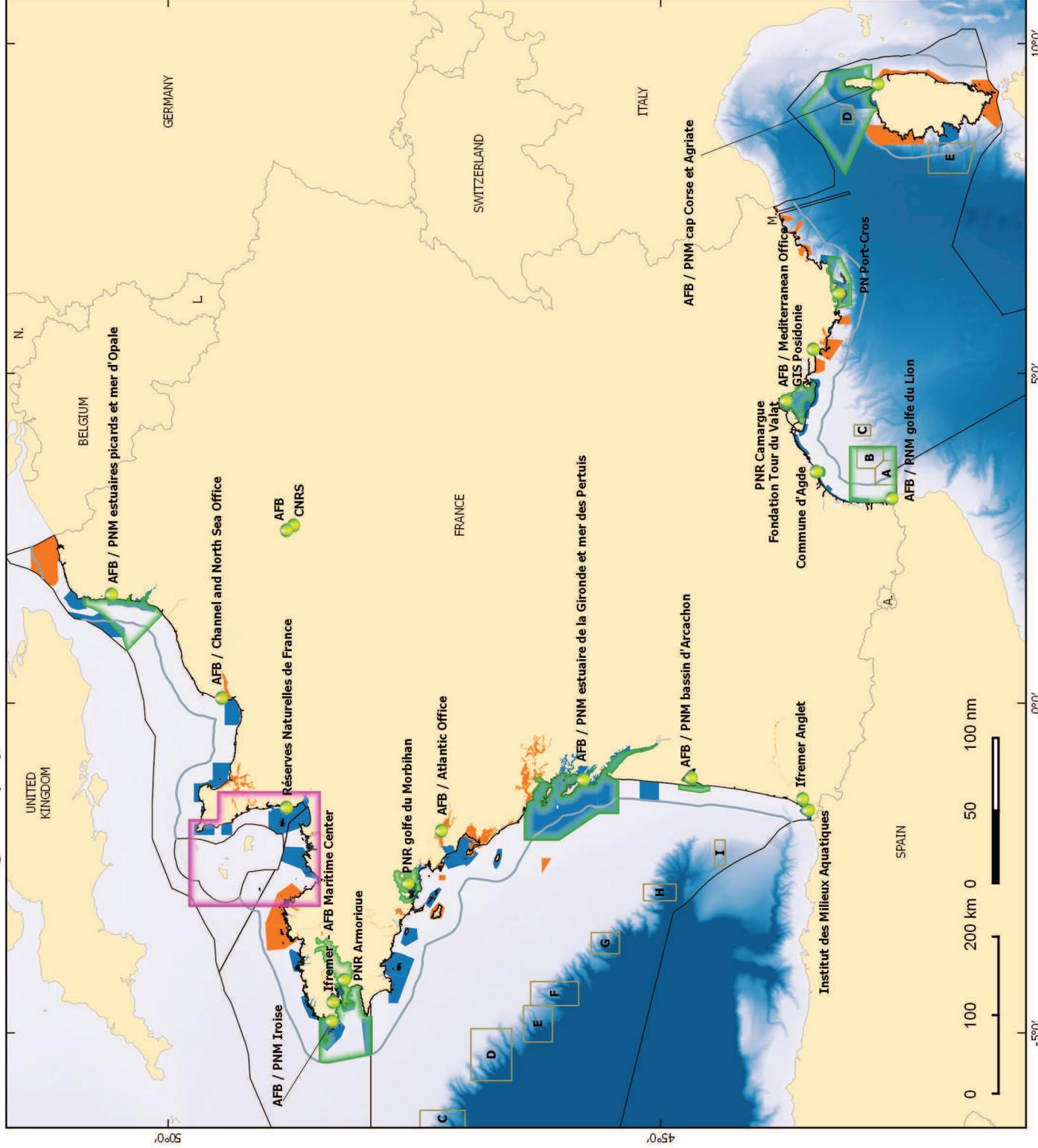


- Natura 2000 > The Habitats Directive sites
- Major areas identified for reefs habitats
- Marine subregions (French parts)
- External boundaries of French territorial sea

Data sources:
 protected areas: MNHN 2017, AFB 2017
 major areas identified for reef habitats: MNHN 2016
 main cities: AFB 2017
 marine subregions (French parts): AFB 2017
 French territorial sea external boundaries: SHOM 2017
 bathymetry : EMODNET 2016, GEBCO 2014

Coordinates system : WGS 84 / Pseudo Mercator

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- Beneficiaries Headquarters and regional embeddings
- Natura 2000 > The Habitats Directive sites
 - bénéficiaire ou bénéficiaire associé
 - non couvert par les bénéficiaires associés
- Marine subregions (French parts)
- External boundaries of French territorial sea

AFB Agence française pour la biodiversité
 GIS Groupement d'intérêt scientifique
 PN Parc national
 PNM Parc naturel marin
 PNR Parc naturel régional

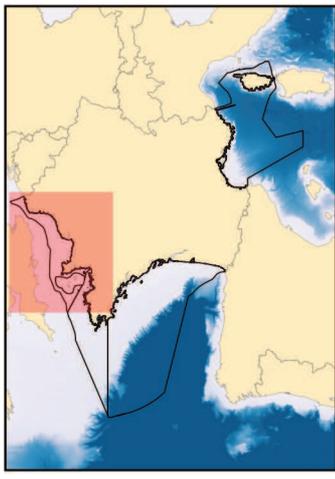
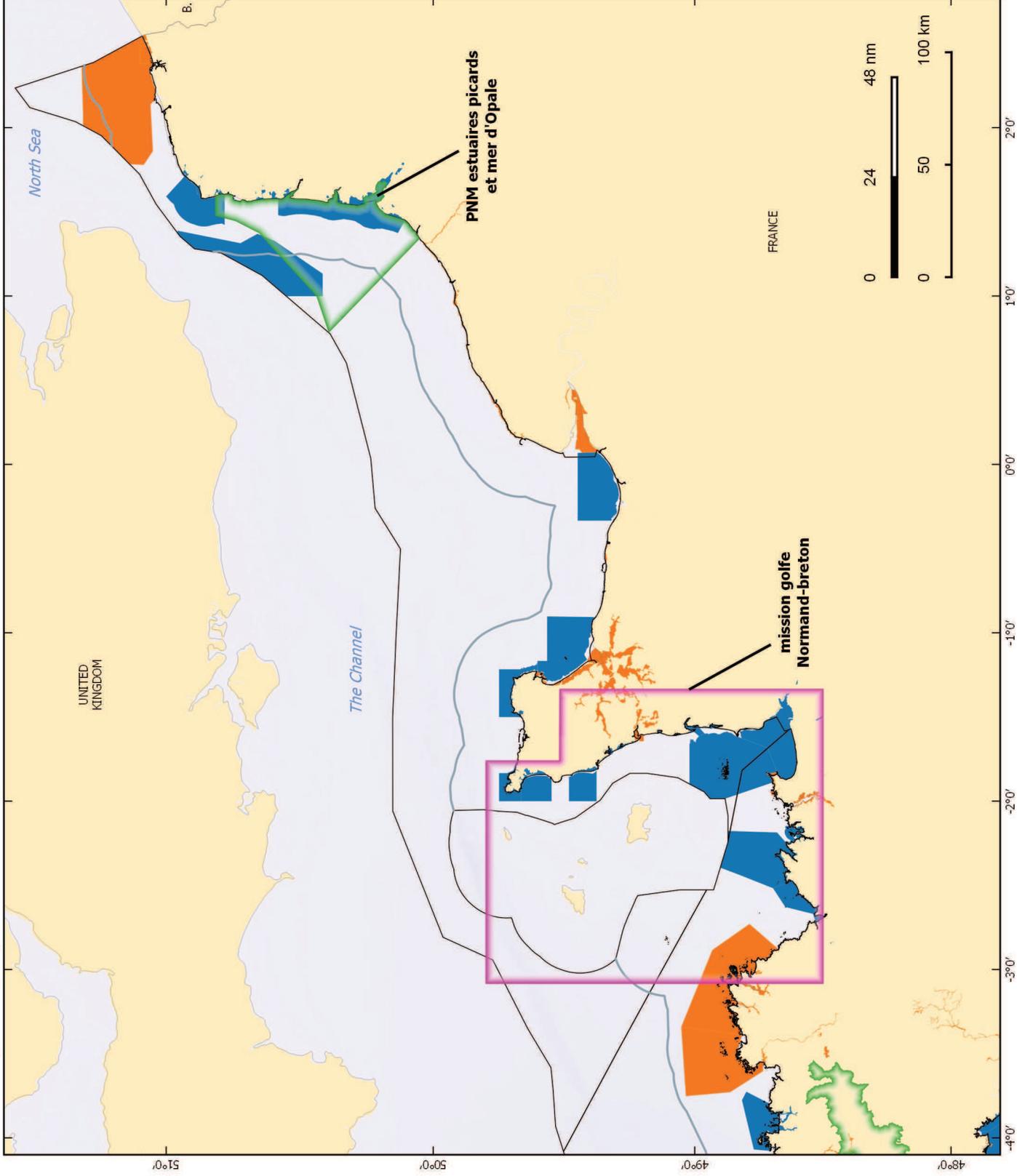
Data sources:
 protected areas: MNHN 2017; AFB 2017
 marine subregions (French parts): AFB 2017
 French territorial sea external boundaries: SHOM 2017
 bathymetry : GEBCO 2014

Coordinates system : WGS 84 / Pseudo Mercator

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**CELTIC SEA, THE CHANNEL AND NORTH SEA
LIFE Integrated project: Beneficiary Sites**

EDITED: 18/4/2017



- Protected areas managed by beneficiaries
- Golfe Normand breton territory
- Natura 2000 Sites
(The Habitats Directive)**
- Managed by a beneficiary
- Not managed by a beneficiary
- External boundaries of French territorial sea
- Marine subregions (French parts)

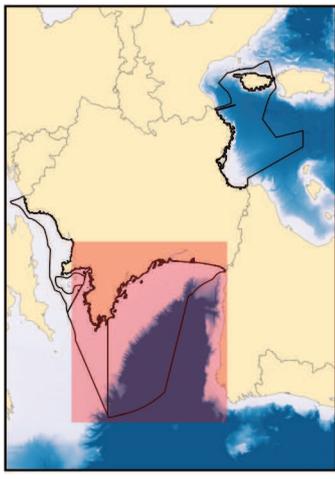
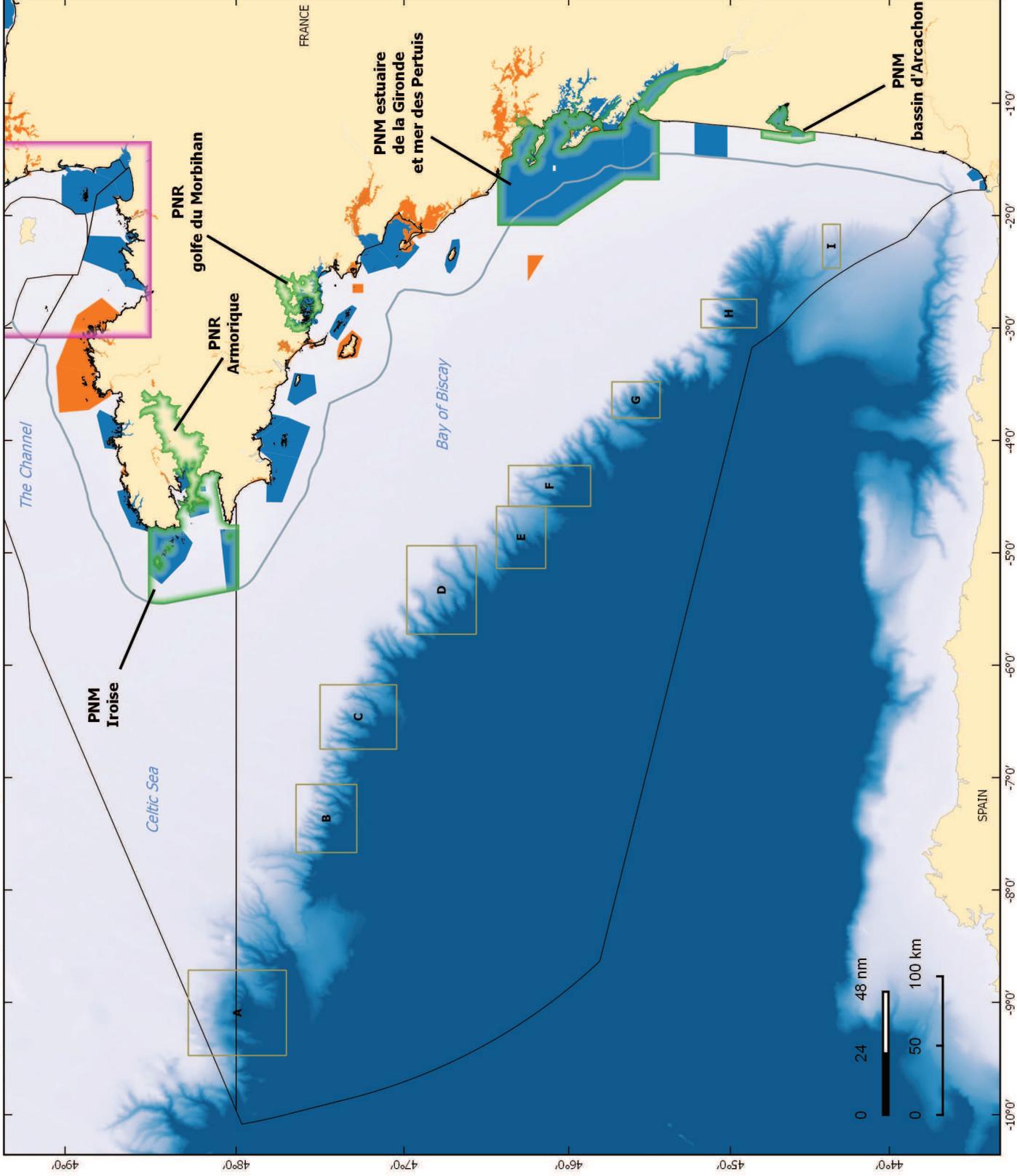
Data sources:
 protected areas: MNHN 2017, AFB 2017
 major areas identified for reef habitats: MNHN 2016
 main cities: AFB 2017
 marine subregions (French parts): AFB 2017
 French territorial sea external boundaries: SHOM 2017
 bathymetry : EMODNET 2016, GEBCO 2014

Coordinates system : WGS 84 / Pseudo Mercator

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BAY OF BISCAY AND CELTIC SEA
LIFE Integrated project: Beneficiary Sites

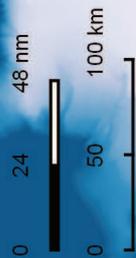
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- Protected areas managed by beneficiaries
 - Golfe Normand breton territory
 - Major areas identified for reefs habitats
- Natura 2000 Sites (The Habitats Directive)**
- Managed by a beneficiary
 - Not managed by a beneficiary
- External boundaries of French territorial sea
 - Marine subregions (French parts)

Data sources:
 protected areas: MNHN 2017, AFB 2017
 major areas identified for reef habitats: MNHN 2016
 main cities: AFB 2017
 marine subregions (French parts): AFB 2017
 French territorial sea external boundaries: SHOM 2017
 bathymetry: EMODNET 2016, GEBCO 2014

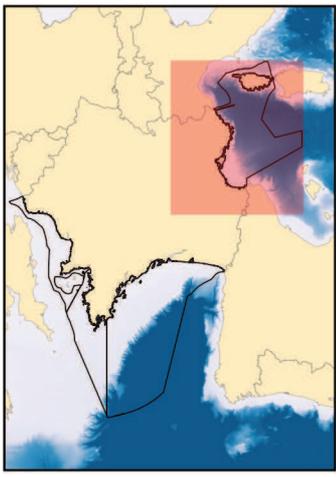
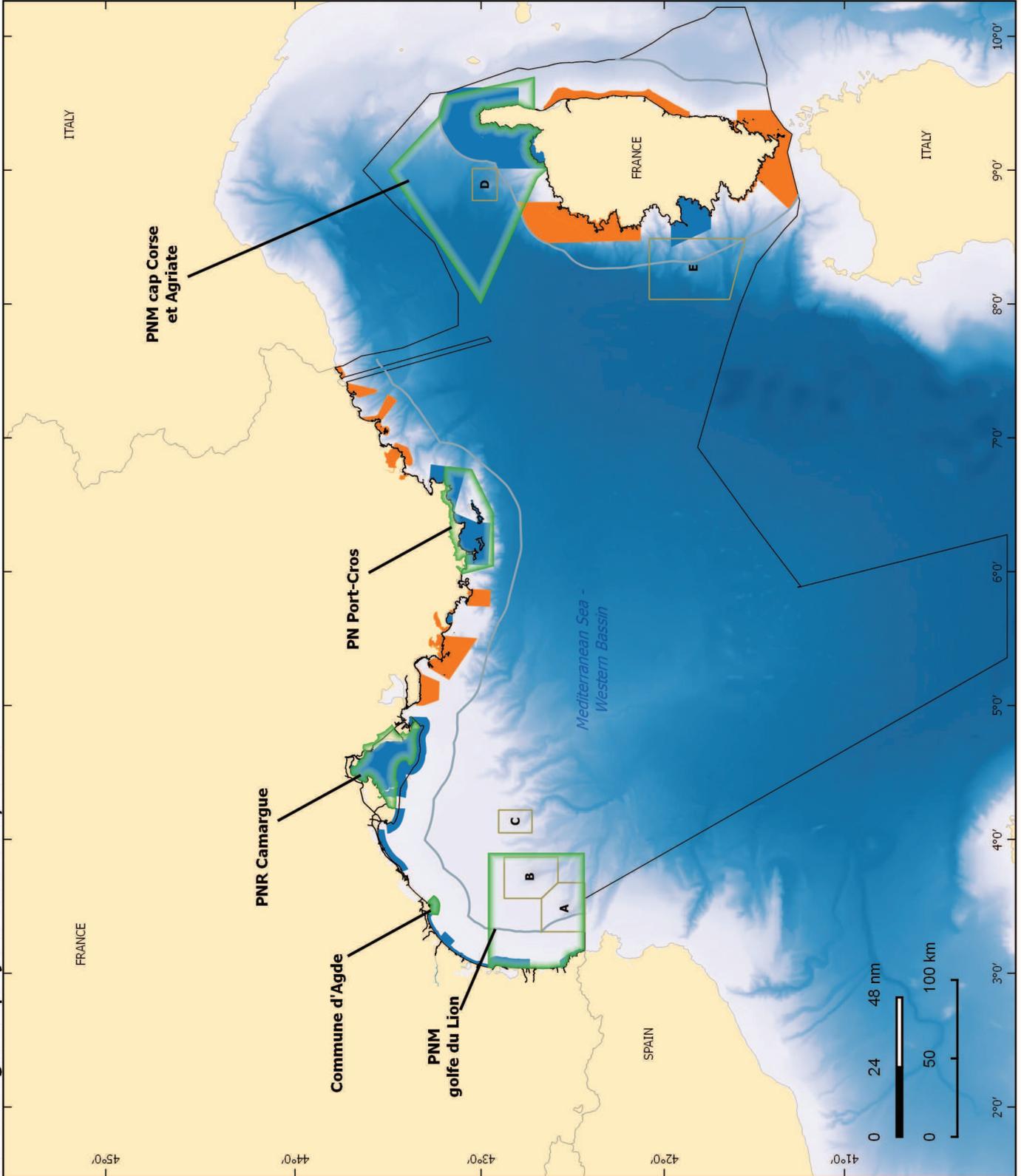
Coordinates system : WGS 84 / Pseudo Mercator



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**MEDITERRANEAN SEA
LIFE Integrated project: Beneficiary Sites**

EDITED: 19/4/2017

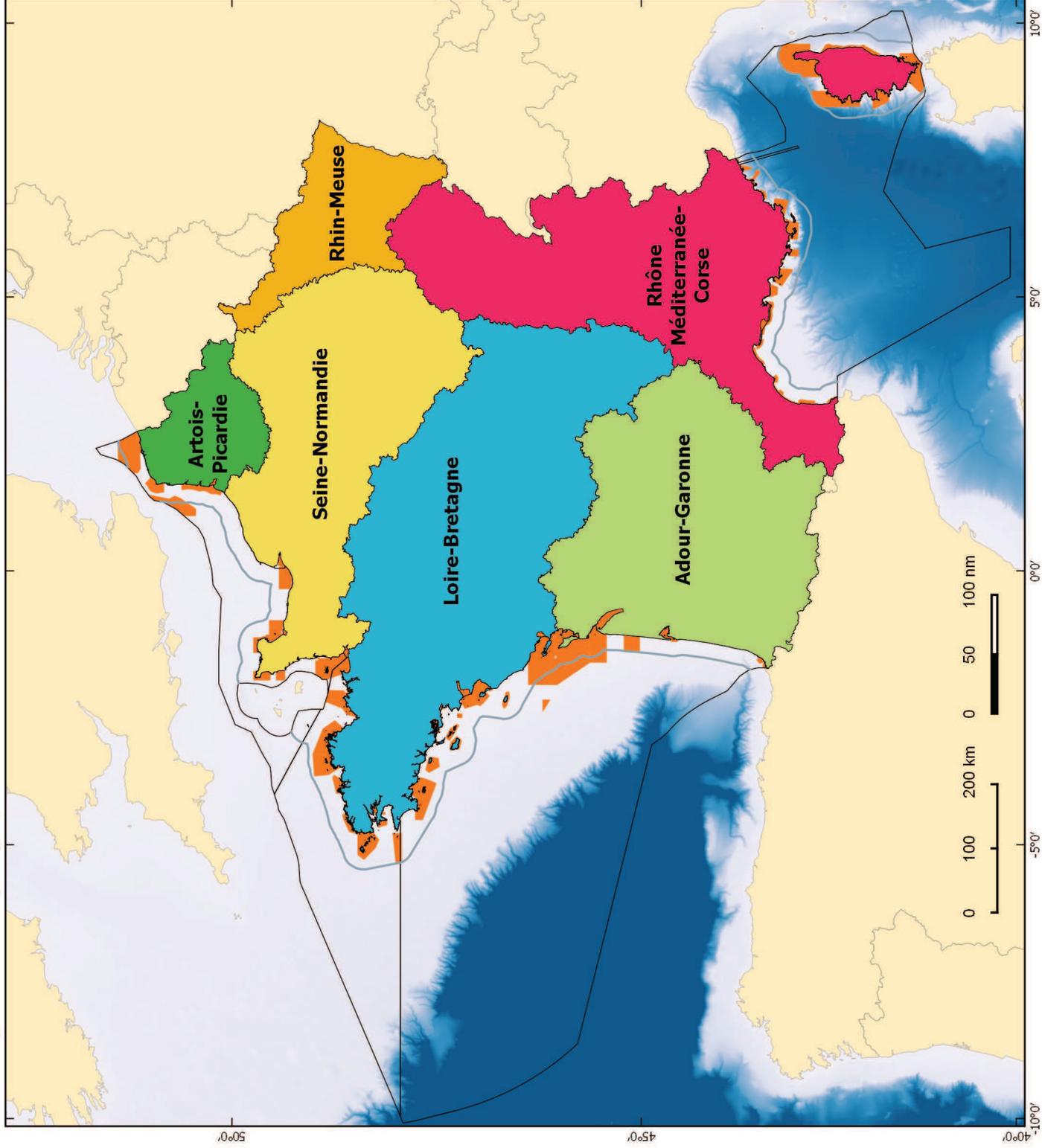


-  Protected areas managed by beneficiaries
 -  Major areas identified for reefs habitats
- Natura 2000 Sites
(The Habitats Directive)**
-  Managed by a beneficiary
 -  Not managed by a beneficiary
-  External boundaries of French territorial sea
 -  Marine subregions (French parts)

Data sources:
 protected areas: MNHN 2017, AFB 2017
 major areas identified for reef habitats: MNHN 2016
 main cities: AFB 2017
 marine subregions (French parts): AFB 2017
 French territorial sea external boundaries: SHOM 2017
 bathymetry: EMODNET 2016, GEBCO 2014

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Water Agencies and hydrographic basins

- ADOUR-GARONNE
- ARTOIS-PICARDIE
- LOIRE-BRETAGNE
- RHIN-MEUSE
- RHONE-MEDITERRANEE-CORSE
- SEINE-NORMANDIE

Natura 2000 > The Habitats Directive sites

Marine subregions (French parts)

External boundaries of French territorial sea

Data sources:

hydrographic basins: sandre 2008
 protected areas: MNHN 2017, AFB 2017
 marine subregions (French parts): AFB 2017
 French territorial sea external boundaries: SHOM 2017
 bathymetry : EMODNET 2016, GEBCO 2014

Coordinates system : WGS 84 / Pseudo Mercator

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DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OVERALL PLAN

To implement the “marine habitats” portion of the PAF, the MarHa IP proposes creating a national strategy that will lead to a process, mobilize additional funds for Natura 2000 and involve all stakeholders as effectively as possible. The IP is necessary for the PAF to be fully implemented. It will stimulate and promote Natura 2000 policy on marine habitats through the technical contributions it will make.

The strategy is based on a period of 8 years in order to include a complete evaluation cycle to assess the conservation status of habitats (2019-2024) and draw technical and financial analysis from it to hence adjust or complete the IP actions.

It will include future Natura 2000 marine sites (designation in 2017) in order to deploy IP actions across the marine habitat network.

Selection of actions

Selection of best practice, demonstration and pilot actions has been based on the current needs and priorities established by stakeholders and especially site managers, authorities responsible for implementing the Habitats Directive in France, and scientists.

The actions concern all marine habitats of community interest, particularly with respect to improving their knowledge and methods for mitigating or eliminating anthropic factors that deteriorate their conservation status.

All contributions of the IP to the PAF are shown in the diagram below.



Figure 1: Contributions of the IP to the implementation of the PAF

The actions of the IP were also selected excluding the actions funded by the additional funds, and in particular:

- coordination of foreshore sites funded by the EAFRD in Brittany;
- coastal habitat monitoring performed by water agencies;
- actions concerning commercial fishing and aquaculture funded by the EMFF.
- routine actions related to the implementation of marine Natura 2000 funded by the AFB and Directorate of Water and Biodiversity (DEB).

In the short-term (Phase 1: 2 years and 2 months), this involves implementing strategic actions that lay the groundwork for the full implementation of the IP:

- Creation of a strong national coordination team (8 people working on different themes) responsible for the operational implementation of IP actions and monitoring;
- Strengthening of local teams evenly and strategically distributed across France's different coasts;
- Creation of the partnership and engagement terms for beneficiaries and organisation of the involvement of stakeholders;
- Development of recommendations, preparations for concrete actions and IP impact assessment actions;
- Launch of the first concrete actions and assessment actions.

The total 8-year period of the IP will allow this strategy to be gradually implemented over the first phase of the IP so that an exhaustive assessment can be made of the gaps and shortcomings that hinder the full implementation of the PAF.

In the long term, the actions of the IP are part of a strategy which aims at the mobilisation and federation of energies at local and national scale and the ownership of the Natura 2000 issues by the stakeholders.

Evaluation actions will be put in place to constantly monitor the achievement of PAF objectives and the IP will be refocused, if needed, on meeting expected results at the end of each phase.

Selection of the partnership

The partnership for this national project was built based on the benefits that beneficiary actions will bring to the IP and the those that the IP to bring to beneficiaries. The basic criteria for selecting the beneficiaries are listed below:

- capacity to implement national actions;
- capacity to implement pilot actions locally, including inter-site actions or between different protection tools;
- capacity to meet the administrative and financial (including cash flow) requirements of LIFE projects;
- long-term capacity.

The beneficiaries are spread across 2 biogeographical regions and all marine habitats are represented in the sites they manage.

Nature protection associations are not included in the partnership because there are usually involved in the local scale and cannot ensure the implementation of nationwide actions. They will be involved locally via the outsourced services included in many actions (Action E3, etc.). Users and their representatives will be able to join the partnership depending on the results of the first actions, starting from Phase 2.

EU ADDED VALUE OF THE PROJECT AND ITS ACTIONS

Extent and quality of the contribution to the objectives of LIFE

The IP will primarily contribute to Life Nature objectives (implementation of the Natura 2000 directives, and therefore the Priority Action Framework (PAF) objectives) and more specifically, to the whole implementation of its marine habitat component. To reach this objective, the following results are expected:

°Expected level of PAF implementation

The result expected at the end of the IP with respect to the cross-cutting objective is an improvement in conservation status for all habitats by 2025 - with at least half the habitats having a good conservation status, and no habitat having an unknown conservation status.

The result expected for 2040 is a good conservation status for all habitats.

It is expected that the project will contribute to implementation of the Priority Action Framework and

In this regard, the IP responds to the EU Biodiversity strategy, and particularly Target 1 «Complete the establishment of the Natura 2000 network and ensure good management » and more specifically the objective 1a « Member States and the Commission will ensure that the phase to establish Natura 2000, including in the marine environment, is largely complete by 2012 ». The IP aims at improving the conservation status of marine habitats of Community interest across all French mainland waters.

The main direct actions that will be implemented to achieve this result are the conservation actions, and in particular Action C6 (implementation of regulated areas) and Action C7 (lower impact recreational anchorages and navigational markings; removal of litter) and Action C4 (pilot areas on concurrent pressures).

°Area covered by the IP actions, the number of sites

The network covered by the IP includes all sites listed for marine habitats under the Habitats Directive. The IP will target a total of 32,130 km², plus the surface area of the offshore sites, whose precise boundaries have not been definitively set at the time of IP submission.

There are two implementation levels in this network:

1. The overall network

The network will be particularly served by actions concerning:

- governance and stakeholder involvement (Actions A1, C1, D3, D4);
- ecological and socio-economic knowledge for ecological and socio-economic monitoring of the network (Actions A2, A3, C5, D1, D2);
- management planning (Actions A4, D4);
- capacity building (Actions C2, C3, D5);
- communication and dissemination (Actions E1, E2, E4, E5).

2. Selected sites

The sites will be served by best practice, demonstration and pilot actions (see Form B4).

These sites have been selected for their relevance to site issues and the content of the action and the habitat issues at the biogeographic level.

°Expected improvement in long term capacity

Long-term improvement of capacities for monitoring and assessing the conservation status of marine habitats will be performed by:

- setting up a scientific and technical methodological framework at a national level which will last beyond the IP, including the Habitat Manual;
- implementing tools for making all documents required for management available, including experience feedback;

- managing marine Natura 2000 data on habitats;
- extended and optimised participation of stakeholders to facilitate their involvement in Natura 2000 implementation;
- improvement in knowledge of habitats (monitoring and assessment) and of their interaction with activities;
- development of new funding sources for Natura 2000.

The goal is to develop a common culture for all stakeholders on implementation of Natura 2000 in marine habitats;

° Other environmental objectives of the LIFE programme

*Climate and biodiversity. The LIFE Integrated Project (IP) is part of the 7th EU Environment Action Programme (2013-2020).

The LIFE IP on marine habitats contributes to advancing the EU Biodiversity Strategy, not only for Target 1 (implement the Habitats Directive), but also Target 2 (maintain, improve and restore ecosystems and their services) and Target 4 (make fishing more sustainable).

Extent and quality of the mobilisation of other funds

The statement of needs, mobilisation of funding and coordination between funds is considered to be a key objective of the project. To this end, a Natura 2000 financing manager will be allocated to these activities at 80% FTE over the 8 years of the IP.

Action C9 aims to draw up a funding strategy for the next European programmes (2021-2027) and organise national coordination between the relevant financial institutions.

°Quality of coordination with other financial mechanisms

DPMA (Department of Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture):

Coordination with the DPMA, the authority responsible for managing the EMFF, will be managed by the French directorate for water and biodiversity (DEB) and the AFB financing manager, particularly during calls for projects organised by the DPMA.

Water agencies, regional councils:

Coordination with the water agencies and regional councils (EAFRD and ERDF) will be ensured through the organisation of annual regional or inter-regional meetings bringing together all financial institutions and government services with a role in completing Natura 2000 funding applications.

Finally, coordination with the IP partners involved in the complementary actions (DEB, IFREMER, AFB) will be managed by the financing manager during half-yearly project management meetings.

°Level of mobilisation

EU funds:

The amounts set out in the financial plan have been identified based on remaining budget amounts not used in the 2014-2020 programme. They correspond to an estimation for projects working on marine habitats. The goal of the IP will be to incorporate Natura 2000 into the following programme for 2021-2027.

The amounts estimated for water agencies are estimates for 8 years of the IP. They are based on annual budgets for the last 10 years, primarily earmarked for marine habitat monitoring actions under WFD implementation which are complementary to Actions A2 and D1.

The DEB and AFB amounts are estimates of what will be attributed to marine Natura 2000 for habitats, excluding IP actions.

Finally, the amount set for IFREMER relates to an oceanographic campaign planned for 2018, which directly complements Actions A2, D1 and E3.

Quality of multi-purpose mechanism, synergies and integration

°Natura 2000, MSFD, WFD

The project creates synergy between the various marine public policies such as Natura 2000, MSFD and WFD by pooling resources and methods (Actions A2 and E4), by networking decision-making bodies together for each policy (Actions A1 and C1) and by coordinating between funds (Action C9). These synergies can also be seen in the connection with the

complementary actions, as links are created and maintained as part of project development and implementation (e.g. strengthening of connections with water agencies).

The data generated in this project will be entered into existing IT systems for optimising the respective reports for these European directives (Actions A3 and F3).

Seeking Favourable Conservation Status for marine habitats serves the goal of MSFD Good Environmental Status and WFD good status for water quality.

Natura 2000 implementation on species under Natura 2000 directives will serve the LIFE IP communication and awareness-raising actions for marine habitats.

The European fisheries and aquaculture policy will also serve LIFE IP, e.g. through identification of needs for regulated areas (Action C6) in offshore sites.

More generally, the IP contributes to implementation of the Marine Environment Action Plan (PAMM) programme of measures for the MSFD (two French measures are focused on Natura 2000).

°EU climate adaptation and mitigation strategies

IP investment on marine environment monitoring issues at a national level contributes to identification of climate change and can be used to prepare and adapt Natura 2000 management to this issue. Improving the conservation status of habitats contributes to increasing the resilience of these habitats and their ability to adapt to climate change.

° Integrated maritime policy

The LIFE IP also contributes to implementation of the integrated maritime policy and supplies content for the environmental aspect of maritime planning which is beginning in France.

AFB is involved in parallel in three DG MARE maritime spatial planning projects.

°Dissemination in professional or leisure activity sectors

Action E1 contributes to dissemination of IP in sector policies and to incorporating them into Natura 2000 objectives.

Data management and data ingestion

The IP will use important mean for management and dissemination. It will feed national, European and international platforms. In addition, the IP will well marine users in valuing data collected during impact studies and will contribute to the European data ingestion strategy.

Replicability and transferability

The IP seeks to test a strategy for multiplying effective actions on habitats and species through other policies or in other countries.

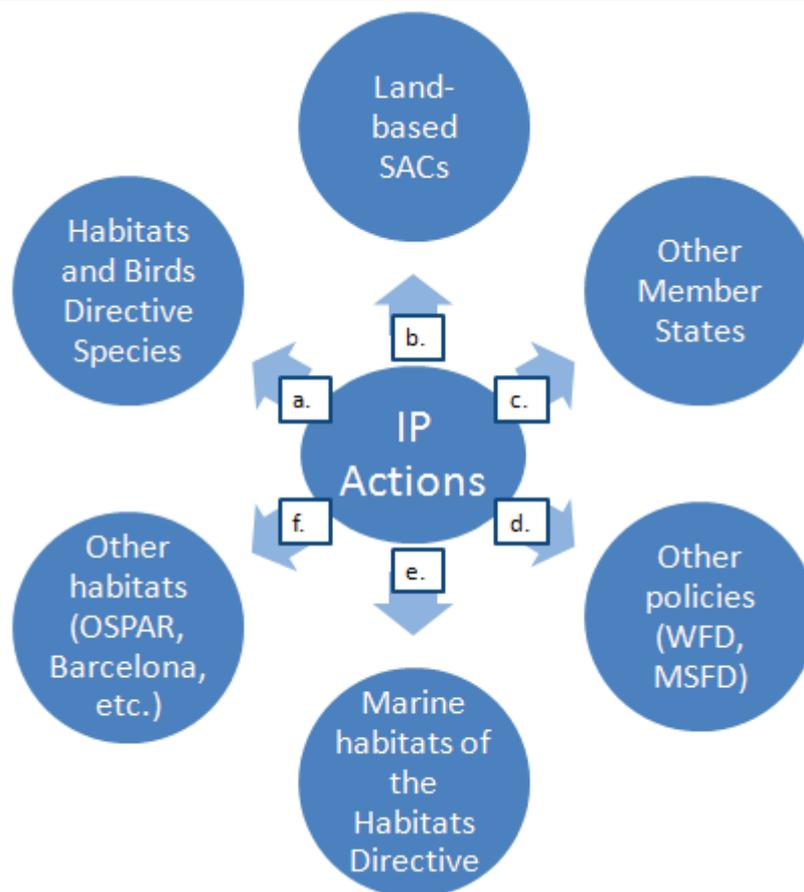


Figure 2: Replicability and transferability of IP actions

To this end, the IP plans

- international cooperation actions on marine habitats (Actions C10, C11, E4): sharing knowledge of habitats, of monitoring and assessment methods, of implementation of specific measures, of involvement of stakeholders=>c. and f.

- effective pilot and demonstration actions (see form B4) could be replicated in future best practice projects in other network sites covered by the IP and other managers, particularly via the plan to build capacity (C2, C3) and network stakeholders => e.

- actions for planning (A3), monitoring and assessment of conservation status (A2, D1) could be transferred to species in land environments and under other policies such as the WFD and MSFD =>a. b. and d.

- implementation of the marine observatory by RNF aims to deploy and transfer their results in phase 4 of the IP => e.

- The IP will focus on the demonstration aspect, and as much as possible on serving as a catalyst, e.g. for Actions C4 and C6, C7) => e.

The funding lever represented by the IP will provide the means to replicate these actions.

Strategy for deliverables

The deliverables are considered as tools, intended to be disseminated, in particular through the toolbox developed in action C.2. In this logic the report format is generally not suitable and lighter formats will be sought. Therefore, although some actions will provide reports, the strategy of the IP is to produce "light" deliverables as much as possible to facilitate dissemination.

Beneficiaries have agreed on the principle, based on the experience that hundreds of pages report are rarely read. So that, most actions will provide factsheets activities feedback and that will be a requirement for the organisations selected through the calls for proposals.

See for instance the format of a factsheet on the experience "bateau bleu" in the Mediterranean.

<http://www.aires-marines.fr/Media/Agence/Fichiers/Documents-techniques/Mise-en-aeuvre-de-l-operation-Bateau-bleu-pour-la-reconnaissance-de-professionnels-engages-dans-le-parc-national-de-Port-Cros>

All the finalised products, when validated, will be disseminated either through the toolbox (including the international page) for technical products or through the project website for the wide audience products.

Transnational, green procurement, uptake of research results:

Transnational

The cooperation actions (see above) will contribute to the European added value provided by the IP.

Green procurement

Action F4 on the eco-responsible approach aims for 100% of IP publications to use eco-certified paper and plant-based ink for printing

Uptake of research results

The scientific part of the IP is central, and features particularly in the preparatory actions. Of the 12 IP beneficiaries, 5 are scientific organisations (AFB and UMS PatriNat, GIS *Posidonie*, *Tour du Valat* (TDV), CNRS and RNF) which will rely on transnational projects such as Interreg MESH (Mapping European Seabed Habitats), the EUSeaMap project (EMODnet), etc.

BEST PRACTICE / INNOVATION / DEMONSTRATION CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT**BEST PRACTICE:**

The IP will implement methods and techniques previously tested and approved or resulting from the IP itself. Action C3 is dedicated to collecting and sharing best practices. Its aim is to develop a digital toolkit that will provide all stakeholders with standardised information.

Use of results validated in the LIFE + recreational seafood hand harvesting project

- project governance and management: open steering committees for project management (IP actions: A1, C1, D3 and F1);
- the ESTAMP database will be fully incorporated and used to organise data on Natura 2000 (Actions A5, F3);
- indicators developed in the LIFE+ project for boulder field, honeycomb worm and zostera grass habitats (IP actions: A2, D1);
- mitigation of the impacts of activities by changing user behaviours (IP action: C8);
- continuation of actions related to recreational seafood hand harvesting;
- use of signs installed on sites (Action E2 of the IP).

Use of results validated in the LIFE + LAG'Nature project

- method for assessing Mediterranean lagoon habitats (IP Actions: A2, D1);
- capacity building: continuation of stakeholder networking and training actions, including land-sea relationships (IP actions: C2, C3 and D5);

Promoting and capitalising on effective Natura 2000 measures:

- dissemination of effective Natura 2000 measures to all managers and stakeholders via the toolkit (PI action: C3);
- organisation of training workshops to share best practices (IP action: C2);
- use of networks established by the MAIA and PANACHE Interreg projects: stakeholder networking actions (IP actions: C2, C3, E1, E4);
- management recommendations (IP action: A4);
- sharing methods with other member states (IP actions: C10, C11).

Other best practice actions in the IP:

- promotion of the decision-making process (approach: TRIAGE) implemented in the VALMER Interreg project (IP action: A3)

Beyond best practices, the project will seek to compile all resources for managing Natura 2000 sites and make them available in adapted tools that will optimise effectiveness. For this, the content will be analytical and specify the conditions and levels of effectiveness. They will provide information on the possibility of applying different best practices.

DEMONSTRATION:

Most concrete actions will focus on demonstrations, in other words, on experimental implementation of methods that have been approved in another context, on a limited number of sites. Each demonstration will be designed based on the interest (for the analysis of whether they can be applied elsewhere) of working on one or several sites that are either grouped together or far from each other.

The actions below are aimed at experimenting with methods approved elsewhere, applied to Natura 2000.

- Action A2 will develop methodology for the evaluation of conservation status of habitats.
- Action C1 will implement demonstration actions for governance (use of participatory digital tools, consultation methods, etc.);
- Action C8 will test the creation of an Atlantic underwater trail or experiment with an Atlantic version of the Donia application (for pleasure boaters, divers, recreational fishermen) for the Mediterranean;

- Action C9 will test the creation of user-fee-based funding systems for marine Natura 2000;
- Action D4 will test the implementation of the IUCN Green List certification on Natura 2000 sites;
- Action E3 will test the creation of Educational Managed Marine Areas for marine Natura 2000.
- Action D1 with the development of site dashboards and network observatory for adaptive management.

PILOT (INNOVATION):

Several actions are innovative or experimental in nature:

- A.2.4 will test innovative technologies for the monitoring of habitats.
- Action C3 will test the idea of making documents (manuals, feedback, etc.) available to stakeholders and having them participate in feeding into a digital toolkit;
- Action C4, on pilot areas, will help study the impact of certain uses (especially industrial) and look into a cumulative impact analysis;
- Actions C7.1 and C7.2 on innovative anchorages and waste removal will be innovative actions that will have been tested in the Mediterranean to improve the conservation of seagrass;
- Action C9 will implement a coordinated funding strategy for Natura 2000 that involves regional authorities and will develop innovative funding methods.
- Action E2 will implement an innovative collaborative local coordination platform on a Natura 2000 site in Brittany.

EFFORTS FOR REDUCING THE PROJECT'S "CARBON FOOTPRINT"

The IP will seek to reduce the carbon footprint in the following areas:

Transportation:

Travel will be limited and video-conferencing will be given priority. The IP plans to equip one of the beneficiaries located in south-western France (*Institut des Milieux Aquatiques*) with a video-conferencing system.

Whenever possible, train travel will be the chosen mode of transport for trips.

Carpooling will be organised for regional meetings: workshops, training and IP management meeting.

Travel will partially be reduced thanks to the fact that the IP team is located on several coastal sites in France (on the English Channel, Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts) in order to be close to the stakeholders involved locally.

Organisation of IP meetings

The beneficiaries will, as much as possible, use environmentally responsible caterers for organising their meetings (local products, sustainable packaging, recycling).

Ecological goodies will be given priority.

Paper use:

The IP will seek to implement the following approach: favour non-paper (digital) versions of printed documents, for printed documents, seek to reduce their impact (print on both sides of the page, reduce the size), use recycled paper.

Communication within the partnership

Email charter: avoid large attachments (large documents, photos) and favour the use of an exchange platform (IP website); avoid grouped emails.

Encourage the responsible approach for stakeholders (training for managers/beneficiaries – E4)

Energy use: turn off lights, put computers in sleep mode as soon as possible, save the web pages used the most often in Favourites, shut off heat at night or on Fridays, etc.

Encourage the implementation of the “bike bonus” scheme in beneficiary and stakeholder organisations, waste recycling and composting in the lunchrooms of these organisations, etc.

Draw up carbon footprint reports for each beneficiary in December 2021 and 2024.

Action F4 of the IP describes how to reduce the carbon footprint.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

The main stakeholders involved in the projects are the players responsible for implementing the PAF and Natura 2000 at sea.

The Ministry of the Environment is involved as a cofinancer through the Department of Water and Biodiversity. Other departments in the Ministry will also be involved in the project: the Department of Research and Innovation, and the Department of European and International Affairs.

Within the Ministry for food and Agriculture, the DPMA will be involved as the management authority for the EMFF.

The stakeholders concerned by the IP and involved in the preparation of the present proposals are as follows:

User representatives

Organisations that represent professional maritime activities (maritime clusters, harbor authorities, renewable marine energies, gravel extraction, nautical industries, commercial fishing and aquaculture), or leisure activities (recreational seafood hand harvesting, recreational boating, water sports, diving/snorkelling, etc.) will especially participate in the actions of the project related to their activities: the creation of reference documents, studies of interactions between activities and marine habitats, implementation of measures, training actions, and more broadly, governance and actions aimed at facilitating integrated management. For commercial fishing and aquaculture, users will mainly be involved in the implementation of complementary actions funded by the EMFF.

Site managers and their networks

The managing organisations of Natura 2000, including managers of marine parks (within the AFB), nature reserves or national parks will be responsible for implementing IP actions on their site, providing technical support to governance bodies, and sharing experience.

Networks of site managers such as RNF, PNF (AFB in 2017) and MedPAN will contribute to some cross-cutting actions and help disseminate the results of the project.

The *Conservatoire du littoral* is in charge of sites management. Furthermore, it can be assigned parts of the maritime public domain and asked to manage it by agreement. This assignment involves the payment of fees to the manager for occupation of the maritime public domain.

Scientific organisations

In addition to the scientific and research competences among the beneficiaries, marine biology centres and universities will participate in scientific monitoring protocols, in the development of indicators, and assessments of the impacts of pressures from activities. The project will rely on the working group for the "benthic habitats and sea-floor" component of the monitoring programme. Consultancy firms will complement needs related to data collection, the development of methodologies and assessments.

Local authorities

Local authorities are often involved as Natura 2000 sites managers and elected officials from coastal regional and local authorities are frequently concerned as members of COPILs.

Representatives of these authorities also come together as members of the *Association nationale des élus du littoral* (national association of coastal officials), which will be the starting point for capacity building actions with elected officials.

Regional councils are key counterparts, concerning the use of the EAFRD and ERDF funds for managing marine Natura 2000 sites.

Environmental NGOs

The actions of these NGOs will be directed at raising awareness with the general public about Natura 2000 habitats, environmental education and the implementation of monitoring and citizen science actions.

Central and decentralised administration

The implication of government bodies will be deeply rooted in the IP, which is essential for such cross-cutting projects. These stakeholders will be responsible for coordination between public policies and different funding sources. Various ministries will be involved in addition to the MTES, including the Ministries of European and Foreign Affairs, Defence, National Education, Food and Agriculture, Higher Education and Research, and under the authority of the Prime Minister, the General Secretariat for the Sea and the General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET), which has the mission of coordinating the use of structural funds and their decentralized services. Regional departments for Environment, Planning and Housing (DREAL) oversee the implementation of marine contracts and the management of the Natura 2000 network at the regional level in France and Inter-regional Directorates for the Sea (DIRM) implement the integrated maritime policy at the coastal level.

The partnership with Water Agencies will ensure consistency between the actions of the IP and the actions carried out by these Agencies: coordination actions between the MSFD, the Habitats Directive and the WFD concerning monitoring, actions for improving knowledge of marine habitats, studies on the quality of the water body and interactions between the water body and marine habitats and improving the conservation status of habitats 1130 and 1160. The Rhône-Méditerranée and Corse Water Agency has opted for a more substantial involvement on the marine environment. Furthermore, the action of Water Agencies is likely to evolve since the “biodiversity law” expands their scope of activities to biodiversity.

International counterparts:

In the first instance, countries sharing common maritime boundaries will be privileged interlocutors through their ministries and public establishments in charge of nature conservation. Collaboration with other Member States and third countries will be facilitated through communications in the relevant technical working groups: the Marine Expert Group of the European Commission, the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Protected Areas of the OSPAR Commission and the Regional Activities Center for the Specially protected Areas in the Mediterranean.

The MedPAN network will contribute to the dissemination of the IP’s results to strengthen capacity building of the Mediterranean MPAs managers and will facilitate the implementation of joint management actions.

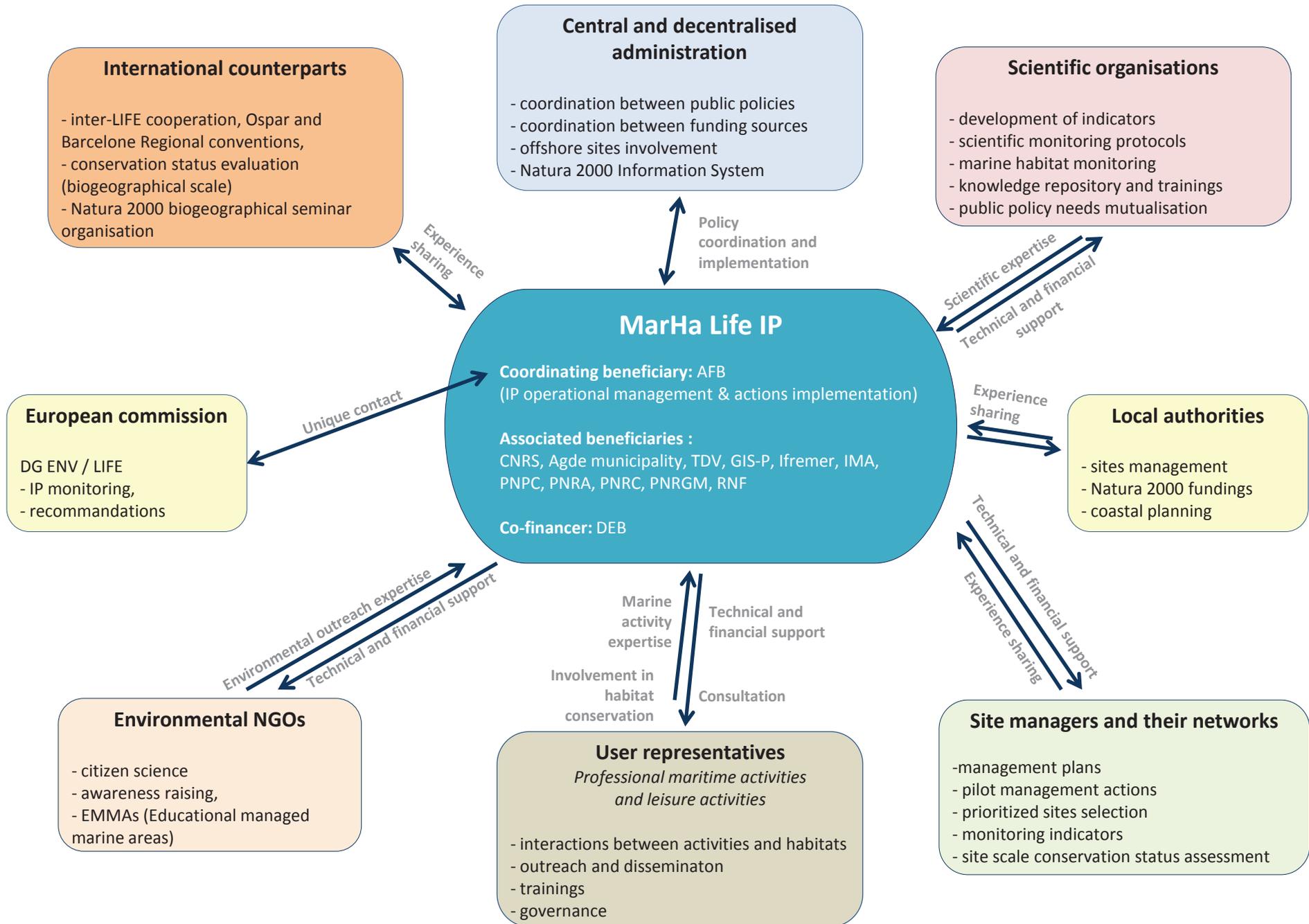
Through its regular partnership with the AFB, IUCN will contribute to the international dissemination and will be technically involved in the actions related to the Green List certification.

The beneficiaries of the Nature IP, especially those targeting marine issues (two in number to date), will participate in experience sharing on IP’s results and management.

All these stakeholders will be involved in the IP governance bodies.

Significant translation means are foreseen in the project to facilitate dissemination. Given that the project will promote the production of light deliverables for dissemination, it will decrease the amount of resources needed for translation. However, should those means be not sufficient, the project will find other solutions to support translations costs, for instance bearing part of the costs by the counterpart interested in the topic (either a country for a particular translation or an international organisations).

Stackeholders involved in MarHa IP



EXPECTED CONSTRAINTS AND RISKS RELATED TO THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

Institutional change:

The French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB) has been established on the 1st of January 2017. Efforts have been made to anticipate this change and to prepare the IP organisation. The managers committee has already planned the organisational structure required for the IP and a new preparatory meeting is scheduled prior to the project beginning. Furthermore, the other organisations (ATEN, ONEMA and PNF) that have been merged into the AFB have brought new competences particularly relevant for the project. Finally the MTES, which is the Ministry responsible for overseeing AFB, is one of the project's partners and is committed to providing continuous support to the project.

Improvement of the conservation status of marine habitats:

The cross-cutting objective of the project is to improve the conservation status of marine habitats. However, the ability to intervene in the marine environment is limited and the results of the project will depend on the effectiveness of actions and the time it takes for ecosystems to respond, which can be long and difficult to predict. Furthermore the conservation status depends on environmental factors such as climate change, which sometimes occur on a scale greater than that of the project. The project will seek to minimise these risks, particularly through the assessment mechanisms aimed at improving long-term monitoring at the site and biogeographical region levels and establishing conditions that will facilitate adaptive management.

There is a risk that the 2024 assessment could result in a decline in conservation status simply because of the difference in methods. Nevertheless, this is unlikely insofar as the current situation is unfavourable in many cases and therefore cannot deteriorate. But if this were to happen, it would nevertheless be regarded as a progress. Indeed, it is better to be aware of a degraded situation and take measures accordingly than to believe that the situation is better and do nothing. One of the fundamental principles of the evaluation of management advocated in France implemented as part of the dashboard approach is adaptive management: putting resources where the situation is unfavourable ("putting money on the red signals"). Unfavourable results will therefore be an argument for intensifying actions on the habitats concerned (regulatory measures among others). The lack of robustness of current results is sometimes invoked, leading to uncertainty about the need to implement measures, rightly so. This progress is therefore necessary to maintain a trusting relationship with stakeholders and to put in place appropriate measures.

The scale of the project, selecting actions:

One of the difficulties of these large-scale projects is selecting actions that address issues in a realistic and appropriate manner. To mitigate this risk, tools have been developed to prioritise issues so that resources are allocated to areas that are essential to the conservation status of habitats.

Coordination of stakeholders:

One of the project's major areas of action is the coordination of stakeholders who can help implement Natura 2000. The success of the project therefore depends on the level of involvement of these stakeholders. The project will address this by allocating human resources specifically to these coordination issues and through training and communication aimed at helping stakeholders understand the approach.

Cross-border cooperation:

The success of cross-border cooperation planned under action C10 is dependent on the engagement of international counterparts. An assumption under this action is that the projet provides means that will foster the discussions and will benefit everybody (for instance scientific inventories, social and economic surveys, a legislative study will be financed by the projet and shared with international stakeholders). National organisations in charge of Natura 2000 have been contacted since early stages, as the letters of support from the various governments annexed to the concept note show. Regarding the Spanish counterparts, the two

situations are different. In the case of the "baie de Chingoudy" site, no counterpart exists as the site was supposed to be designated as a French site only at the beginning and the IP action (C.10) intends to set up the basis of the cooperation. In the case of the "Cap de creus" site, AFB staff of the PNM du Golfe du Lion has informed their counterpart of the IP action. Regarding the Italian sites par of the zone 4, they were not contacted individually. This topic stems from various discussions, especially within the MedPAN network, which express the need to develop management actions targeting luxury yachting.

Risk management:

A risk register will be included within Action F1. The French Agency for Biodiversity has experience in risk mapping using a standard methodology (risk typology, scoring risk, entities and periods concerned, action plan, preventive and curative measures). Risk mapping or inventory is part of the project management tools to be developed by the project coordinator and the administrative and financial manager. The project management information and management system used by the AFB (Project Business Excellence) also provides support for risk management (monitoring of planning, deadlines and achievements).

CONTINUATION / VALORISATION AND LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AFTER THE END OF THE PROJECT

- How will you ensure the long-term implementation of the plan and beyond?

The overall long-term implementation strategy for Natura 2000 is based on the following principles.

°collaborative definition and implementation of the IP actions

The IP actions are the priority actions that have been collectively defined by the stakeholders involved in implementing Natura 2000. It will therefore be easier to reproduce them after the IP and use their outputs.

By the authorities responsible for implementing marine Natura 2000.

The coordinating beneficiary and co-funder of this IP are the authority with a technical support role in implementing marine Natura 2000 (including the direct management of 60 sites) and the authority responsible for implementing Natura 2000 in France respectively. The long-term implementation of this IP is therefore partially ensured by the fact that these established organisations are developing the IP actions within their role of implementing Natura 2000. A large number of permanent AFB staff helped draw up the IP and are set to support the on-going process. Continuity will be ensured through their on-site mediation and annual technical workshops organised by the AFB in its support role for the entire network.

The actions developed in the IP will be useful for the almost daily work of these authorities in coordinating implementation of Natura 2000.

By all stakeholders involved in managing marine Natura 2000

Building the IP actions is also based on the contributions of stakeholders, including Natura 2000 site managers. These contributions were collected during:

- a national one-day workshop with around one hundred participants (June 2016);
- public consultation concerning the September 2016 concept note;
- 3 workshops in January with a total of 150 participants.

As well as these workshops, working groups were formed to develop each action or group of actions, led by the AFB permanent thematic staff, ensuring that the actions are consistent with the long-term needs and objectives for marine Natura 2000 habitats.

The governance methods tested will seek to increase the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making for site management at local, regional and national levels. Along with communication actions, ownership of the Natura 2000 approach and issues will strengthen the long-term implementation of the Habitats Directive.

°Scientific and technical contributions of the IP

The IP seeks to improve the knowledge of marine habitats and validate monitoring and assessment methods for the scientists that represent these habitats at national level in France, in accordance with the local issues for reporting at biogeographical level. The Natura 2000 reporting managers for France (UMS PatriNat, part of the AFB, coordinating beneficiary) will be responsible for coordinating and validating these scientific and technical results to ensure their long-term use.

°Capacity building (see form B3, *Expected improvement of the long-term capacity*)

The capacity-building strategy will capitalise on and optimise the outputs and results of all IP actions through a number of adaptive tools and instruments tailored to the target audience. The outputs, including feedback from positive experiments, will be shared with as many people as possible. The toolkit will mainly target stakeholders involved in managing Natura 2000 sites and will be an adaptive, dynamic and long-term resource in the AFB resource centre. Training carried out during the IP will build the capacity of stakeholders in the long term. The project website will remain operational 5 years after the end of the IP. Strengthening stakeholder networking will support dynamic and adaptive capacity-building.

°Integration in sector policies and synergy with other environmental policies.

The quality of multi-purpose mechanisms, synergies and integration of the IP, described in the B3 form, ensures the continuation of some actions beyond the IP.

Monitoring and surveillance actions will be included in the MSFD monitoring programme, and effective pilot and demonstration measures could be included in its programme of measures.

°mobilisation of other funds

The extent and quality of the mobilisation of other funds (Form B3) and Action C9b (Elaboration and implementation of a sustainable and coordinated funding plan, including complementary funds) ensure the continuity of some actions of the IP.

Assessment actions will enable adjustments.

In general, the IP will play the role of boosting and integrating resources and systems to create a number of long-term, adaptive and tailored tools.

• Which actions will have to be carried out or continued after the end of the project?

1. Governance and stakeholder involvement actions: Actions A1, C1, C5, D3 and D4

These actions will optimise Natura 2000 site governance at network level. The involvement of stakeholders in defining (Action A1) and implementing (Action C1) these actions will ensure that experiments of effective governance (Action C1) are continued. C5. The offshore site governance method will be proposed in the IP for application across all Habitats Directive or Birds Directive sites if it is effective.

2. Knowledge, monitoring and assessment method actions: Actions A2, A3, D1 and D2

Advances in ecological and socio-economic knowledge will be shared with all stakeholders involved in managing Natura 2000 sites, ensuring use after the IP.

The integration of Natura 2000 objectives in other policies such as the MSFD will also ensure the continuity of these actions.

3. Networking and capacity-building actions: Actions C2, C3, C11, D5, E1 and E4

Optimising and capitalising on the IP results and all outputs concerning marine Natura 2000 habitats in a shared and adaptive digital toolkit integrated into the AFB resource centre, and the training programmes and networks of stakeholders involved in managing Natura 2000 will help communicate the outputs of the IP after the project has finished and beyond its scope of action.

4. Management planning action: Action A4

This action will establish a process for planning site management depending on issues at biogeographical level. This national methodological framework will be used during and after the IP, with the support and management of the AFB.

5. Marine habitat data organisation and management actions: Actions A5 and F3

These actions will be implemented as part of the integration of existing data systems so that data from the IP can be capitalised on and used nationally, beyond the IP.

6. Concrete conservation and management actions: Actions C4, C6 and C7

These actions are pilot and demonstration actions. They will be continued depending on their cost-effectiveness and supported by feedback from the site manager beneficiaries involved in these actions.

7. Actions seeking to limit the pressures of activities by changing behaviours: Action C8.

The continuity of this action will be ensured by providing feedback on the most effective tools and approaches created. The resources for implementation will be provided under the funding action (C9).

8. Funding action: Action C9

This action, especially participation in the 2021-2027 funding programme and perhaps the following programme, will ensure the continuity of the other actions by providing a financial lever for Natura 2000 measures. Additional actions will be ensured beyond the IP. Feedback on innovative funding methods will be provided in the toolkit to ensure dissemination.

9. Cooperation action: Action C10

10. Communication and dissemination actions (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5)

Ownership of the Natura 2000 approach by the general public will benefit this policy beyond the IP. The IP website will be maintained for at least 5 years following the IP.

11. Action to implement an eco-responsible approach: Action F4.

This action will be continued via distribution in the toolkit and the ownership of the approach in each beneficiary organisation.

The Action F5 form is dedicated to the After LIFE Plan.

- How will this be achieved? What resources will be necessary to carry out these actions and how will those capacities be ensured?

Current resources allocated to site management will be maintained within public or private management bodies.

Possible funding will be targeted as much as possible on the needs identified by developing resources and capacity building, especially for marine habitats.

- Will the staff recruited/trained during the project continue to work on the implementation of the plan?

The human resources allocated to the IP will not be extended beyond the IP. Permanent AFB staff working on the implementation of Natura 2000 (thematic coordination and direct management of AFB sites) will continue to do so, carrying on from the IP approach, which itself is incorporated into the AFB Natura 2000 approach. Continuity will be ensured between the project and post-project.

The same is true for the French Ministry of the Environment, responsible for implementing Natura 2000 and co-funder of the IP.

The same pattern applies to other beneficiaries. Permanent staff involved in implementing the IP will receive training on the Natura 2000 approach and culture, and will ensure the link with their actions after the IP.

In particular, stakeholders (site managers, scientists, etc.) will continue the activities of the IP at their level (operator/coordinator).

- How, where and by whom will the equipment acquired be used after the end of the project? (if relevant)

The hyperspectral imaging (Ifemer) and sonar (AFB) sensors have a service life of no more than 10 years, as does most other equipment (diving equipment (AFB), boats).

- To what extent will the results and lessons of the project be actively disseminated after the end of the project to the people and/or organisations that could best make use of them (please identify these people/organisations)?

- all Habitats Directive site managers that have not directly contributed to implementation of the project as a beneficiary or partner (under an agreement, e.g. as a host site for implementation of an action resulting from a call for projects);

- all Habitats Directive / Birds Directive managers

- all steering committee members (stakeholders) from each site

- all EU member states affected by marine habitat conservation

- national stakeholders: users, nature protection NGOs, consulting firms.

Many of the project's actions will especially focus on contributing to this dissemination, which will continue at the end of the project, particularly by the AFB, the French Ministry of the Environment (Department of Water and Biodiversity) and all beneficiaries.