ADAPTING THE IUCN GREEN LIST STANDARD V1.1 TO MEDITERRANEAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

GreenList4MMPAs

Interreg Euro-MED

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DELIVERABLE 1.6 MEDITERRANEAN MPAS-TAILORED IUCN GREEN LIST SET OF GUIDANCE AND NOTES"

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Contact: For any questions regarding the Green List Programme, you can get in touch with a regional focal point by contacting greenlist@iucn.org.

If you use this work to inform the application of the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, or for any other purpose, please contact jose.postigo-sanchez@iucn.org to notify the team and share your experience.

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Zakynthos Marine Protected Area. © Charis Dimitriadis

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Telascica Nature Park, Croacia.
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Background

The Mediterranean Sea is one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in the world. Although it represents only 0.7% of the global ocean surface, it harbours 11% of all known marine species, 28% of which are endemic. Today, the region includes approximately 1,277 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and 43 potential Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), covering 9.68% of its surface. However, only 1.27% of the Mediterranean is under effective management (2019) and only 0.06% are fully protected (Claudet et al., 2020). In order to achieve the Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework—protecting 30% of the planet's oceans by 2030 or 30x30—it is necessary not only to increase the number of Mediterranean MPAs but ensure that they are also efficiently and equitably managed.

This document has been developed in the framework of the *Green List for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas* project, co-funded by the European Union in the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, with the support of SZN, UICN Med, WWF Adria, UICN France, University Aegean and PNCB. The guidance contained here has also been reviewed and approved by the Expert Assessment Group for the Green List (EAGL) of the Mediterranean Marine jurisdiction (the Mediterranean Marine EAGL), a group of geographically and culturally diverse marine experts who oversee recommendations and ensure the integrity of the Green-listing process.

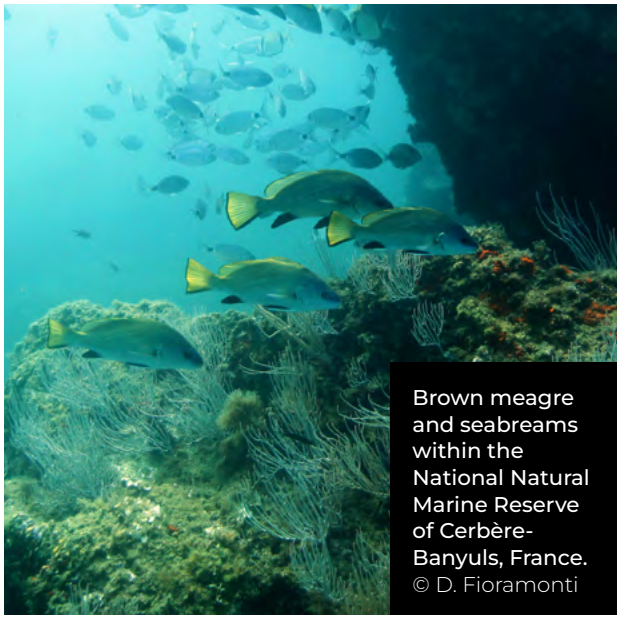
The purpose of this guidance is to support managers of Mediterranean MPAs in understanding and applying to the IUCN Green List standard of Protected and Conserved Areas (the Green List) within their specific social, economic and ecological context. This guidance follows the structure of the Green List Standard and provides detailed notes at the level of Criteria and Generic Indicators. All 50 Generic Indicators are covered, with specific recommendation for interpretation in Mediterranean MPAs.

This document can be used in different ways. It may be read from beginning to end to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Green List Standard and its application. It may also be consulted as a reference tool to clarify specific questions about specific Generic Indicators. The main recommendation is to use it as a companion during the Green List process, providing support to site representatives as they move through the different phases of evaluation.

The guidance is complementary to the official documents of the programme: *IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas: Standard, Version 1.1* (IUCN & WCPA, 2017) and *IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas: User Manual, Version 1.2* (IUCN, WCPA & ASI, 2019). These resources contain additional explanations and guidance regarding interpretation and application of the Standard. More information and updated resources can also be found on the IUCN Green List website.

THE IUCN GREEN LIST OF PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS

The Green List is a global programme launched in 2014 to recognise and promote well-managed protected and conserved areas worldwide. Its main objective is to encourage sites to measure, improve, and maintain their performance, with a double dimension: first, as a pathway for continuous improvement; and second, as a list of sites that demonstrate effective and equitable management.



Brown meagre and seabreams within the National Natural Marine Reserve of Cerbère-Banyuls, France. © D. Fioramonti

As of 2025, the Green List includes 300 sites engaged in the programme, at different stages of the process, with more than 100 sites officially listed as Green List sites, However, only a few of them are marine sites (3 MPAs only in the Med Sea region). The Green List has been recognised by decisions of the Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP13 and COP15) as a voluntary standard for reporting on efficient and equitable management of protected and conserved areas in relation to the 30x30 target. It has also been recognised as a flagship tool under the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean.

At the core of the Green List is the Green List Standard, which defines 17 Criteria supported by 50 Generic Indicators. These cover four essential components:

- Good Governance
- Sound Design and Planning
- Effective Management
- Successful Conservation Outcomes

By committing to meet the Green List Standard, a site must demonstrate and maintain the delivery of real conservation outcomes for both nature and people.

THE GREEN LIST PROCESS

The implementation process begins with a voluntary commitment from a site or organisation within a jurisdiction. Jurisdictions are regional entities of the Green List structure and may be established at the national, subnational, or supranational level.

Once a jurisdiction is established, an Expert Assessment Group for the Green List (EAGL) is created. A typical EAGL is composed of a diverse range of technical experts which encompasses strong scientific and social knowledge and a deep understanding of the local context. Their role is to evaluate candidate sites (protected or conserved areas) who apply to the Green List within their jurisdiction.

The duration of the process varies depending on several factors, including the initial alignment of the site with the Green List indicators and the pace at which it progresses through the different stages. Typically the full assessment last between 1.5 and 5 years".

The process for sites unfolds in three main phases

1. APPLICATION PHASE

The site makes a voluntary commitment through online registration and provides initial evidence for five essential indicators to demonstrate readiness. A self-assessment is encouraged at this stage.

2. CANDIDATE PHASE

Once admitted as a Candidate, the site submits full evidence demonstrating compliance with all Criteria and Indicators, addressing any identified shortcomings. The EAGL then reviews this evidence and may recommend the site for nomination.

3. GREEN LIST PHASE

Candidate sites recommended by the EAGL may be awarded Green List Status by the Green List Committee. Sites that achieve this status receive an official certificate, are promoted globally by IUCN, and are recognised as models of effective and equitable conservation. Green List Status is valid for five years, after which sites must undergo a renewal process to maintain their status.

GENERIC PRINCIPLES OF THE GREEN LIST

This guidance document provides practical recommendations to support Mediterranean MPAs in applying the Green List Standard, addressing each of the 50 Generic Indicators with context-specific advice. By doing so, it seeks to strengthen management practices, improve conservation outcomes, and contribute to the achievement of the global 30x30 target.

It is our hope that this resource will help site managers and their partners to navigate the Green List process with greater clarity and confidence, and to demonstrate the outstanding conservation value of Mediterranean MPAs to the international community.

Several principles underpin the design and implementation of the Green List Standard:

The 8 main principles

1

A PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT

While achieving Green List Status is a milestone, the true value of the programme lies in guiding sites towards improved management. Any site can use the Standard as a framework for identifying areas of progress, even without entering the full process.

2

EXPERT-LED ASSESSMENTS

EAGLs evaluate sites based on both technical expertise and contextual understanding, ensuring fair and context-sensitive assessments.

3

EXTERNAL REVIEW FOR CREDIBILITY

Independent reviewers ensure consistency, fairness, and independence of the process.

4

EVALUATION AT CRITERIA LEVEL

Sites must meet all 17 Criteria to be listed, but not necessarily all 50 Indicators. Partial achievement of certain indicators may be acceptable if the EAGL determines the overall criterion is fulfilled, (see point 6)

5

ACTION PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

If a site cannot meet an indicator during the Candidate Phase, it must submit an Action Plan to address the gap. Once all action plans are implemented and the PA representative considers the site compliant with the approved Adapted Indicators, they may submit their application.

6

CONDITIONAL LISTING

Sites may be listed with time-bound conditions to address minor gaps while still being recognised for their exemplary conservation performance.

7

LOGICAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN INDICATORS

Criteria and indicators are interconnected, and meeting one may depend on fulfilling another. They must therefore be considered together and in order.

8

FLEXIBLE MEANS OF VERIFICATION

The examples of evidences listed in this guidance for each indicator are not necessarily exhaustive. All listed evidences do not have to be provided by the applicant but additional evidences may be asked by EAGL members.

Good Governance

1.1 Guarantee Legitimacy and Voice **1.2** Achieve Transparency and Accountability **1.3** Enable Governance Vitality and Capacity to Respond Adaptively

Sound Design and Planning

2.1 Identify and Understand Major Site Values **2.2** Design for Long-Term Conservation of Major Site Values
2.3 Understand Threats and Challenges to Major Site Values
2.4 Understand Social and Economic Context

Effective Management

3.1 Develop and Implement a Long Term Management Strategy **3.2** Manage Ecological Condition **3.3** Manage Within Social and Economic Context of the Area **3.4** Manage Threats **3.5** Effectively and Fairy Enforce Laws and Regulations **3.6** Manage Access, Resources Use and Visitation **3.7** Measure Success

Successful Conservation Outcomes

4.1 Demonstrate Conservation of Major Natural Values
4.2 Demonstrate Conservation of Major Associated Ecosystem Services **4.3** Demonstrate Conservation of Cultural Values

Component 1: GOOD GOVERNANCE

Introduction

In 2003, the Council of the European Union proposed the following definition: "*Good governance is the transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic, and financial resources for equitable and sustainable development*."

Good governance in the context of governmental decision-making was recognized as an essential component of sustainable development by the UN in the 2000s. It was then applied to the management of protected areas, supported by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

IUCN encourages governments and civil society to recognize the importance of governance as a key concept for protected areas and to promote good governance as an essential component of their effective and equitable management.

Access to information, stakeholder participation, equity, and social justice are at the heart of the first component of the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. This component addresses both the type of governance (who takes decisions?) and the quality of governance (how is governance conducted?).

Candidate site representatives will therefore be invited to provide information on these aspects in their site's self-assessment, relying on the IUCN principles that define the characteristics of good governance and the four broad governance types for protected areas recognised by IUCN.

CRITERIA 1.1 GUARANTEE LEGITIMACY AND VOICE

Generic Indicator 1.1.1

The site's governance structure is clearly defined and documented and in accordance with relevant national or regional government, jurisdiction or recognised authority specifications

GUIDANCE & NOTES

MPA governance refers to the set of organizations, decision-making processes, and structures that shape the operational rules, rights, and responsibilities of actors within a spatially defined coastal or marine area (Mast et al., 2025). It can be an entity (e.g., a regional or local administration, an NGO, a local community), that has been formally mandated by the competent authority (e.g., the Ministry of Environment) that established the MPA to oversee and manage it.

A site's governance structure is often defined in official and publicly available documents, that specify the responsibilities of the different entities involved, in terms of management and implementation as well as the organizational structure of human resources and internal operational processes.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Foundational documents or equivalent containing rules, bylaws, governance structure. Example of foundational documents can be: designation decree/law, organization chart.

Generic Indicator 1.1.2

The site's local governance structures and mechanisms provide civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders with appropriate opportunities to participate in management planning, processes and actions

GUIDANCE & NOTES

The "mechanisms" are the formalized procedures through which the governance structure operates.

In the context of protected areas, "rights-holders" refers to actors socially endowed with legal or customary rights with respect to water and natural resources.

"Stakeholders" possess direct or indirect interests and concerns about those, but do not necessarily enjoy a legally or socially recognized entitlement to them [Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013.].

This indicator assesses if a suite of engagement procedures exists that ensures effective participation of civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders in the management, planning, processes and actions, in ways that are culturally and situationally appropriate and meet the participants' needs.

This includes ensuring the communities, citizen support organisations (CSOs) and/or rights-holders are officially and systematically involved in the planning (e.g. consultation related to the MPA regulation of activities and revision of management strategies to identify shared solutions) and in the implementation of relevant activities. The engagement procedures (e.g. stakeholder identification, public meetings and activities) and the participation of the majority of key actors should be actively supported by the actions of the MPA management body.

The level of interaction between the MPA management body and the communities, CSOs and/or rights-holders allowed for each activity depends on how the applicable (national and local) legislation foresees such interactions.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION: The following "Public Participation Spectrum" by the International Association for Public Participation can be used as a guide to measure the level of participation within the MPA.

Table 1. INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

INFORM ►	CONSULT ►	INVOLVE ►	COLLABORATE ►	EMPOWER ►
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL				
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem. alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently underatood and considered.	To partner with the public In each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC				
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Adapted from IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. International Association of Public Participation www.iap2.org."

RESOURCES

How Is Your MPA Managed?: A Guidebook for MPA Management Planning can be used as a specific guide to support MPA managers in establishing a stakeholder-focused, step-by-step planning process. The guide serves as a practical framework that managers can apply when developing or revising their MPA management plans (Atkinson, 2009).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Stakeholders, CSO and right-holders "map" representing the different organizations, their interest and how they interact with the MPA and participate in management planning (including for example also the marine spatial planning of the area), processes and actions.
2. Documents on the official establishment of stakeholder committee or similar instruments and operational mechanisms that guide management planning, processes and actions
3. Official invitation of the civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders to participate in management, planning, processes and actions
4. Identification of official channels dedicated to participation (institutional website, newsletters, social media, meetings, email, paper forms, assemblies, surveys, etc.)
5. Minutes of meetings during management plan development
6. Number of meetings / frequency of the organized meetings
7. Minutes of meetings related to definition of the processes and actions, together with report of activities implementation

Generic Indicator 1.1.3

The site's local governance structures and mechanisms recognise the legitimate rights of indigenous peoples and local communities

GUIDANCE & NOTES

The Convention on Biological Diversity uses the term "indigenous and local communities" in recognition of communities that have a long association with the lands and waters that they have traditionally lived on or used. Indigenous peoples are defined by their historical ties to specific lands or waters and their unique cultural and social structures (often, when is the case, pre-dating colonization). They can be part of local communities (constitutionally recognized or not), which are more broadly groups that have been living in a specific area for many generations with livelihoods connected to the local ecosystem [for more information see Convention on Biological Diversity (2006).].

This indicator assesses if legitimate rights of indigenous peoples (only if locally applicable) and/or local communities, whether acting collectively or independently, are recognized. For example: the right to own, control and manage ancestral lands/marine areas and resources; pre-existing rights for extractive and non-extractive uses; the right to maintain cultural heritage which could include traditional fishing practices; and the right to determine how their traditional territories and resources are used.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation of formal or informal relationships/agreements with relevant groups in view of constitutional status in each country
2. Reports of meetings with local and/or indigenous communities, possibly transferred to legal documents
3. Number of meetings with local and/or indigenous communities
4. Regulation or legal document recognising the legitimate rights of local communities and describing the channels of participation, when available.

Generic Indicator 1.1.4

Rights-holders and stakeholders are effectively involved in decision-making and the adaptive management of the site.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator focuses on whether or not there is effective engagement of relevant rights-holders and stakeholders.

Effective involvement of rights-holders and stakeholders in an MPA requires the inclusive, rights-based, and adaptive engagement of all relevant marine users (e.g. indigenous peoples, local coastal communities, small-scale fishers) in shaping and steering MPA governance. This ensures that marine conservation outcomes are equitable, legitimate, ecologically informed, and socially resilient over time (Day et al., 2019.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation of formal or informal relationships/agreements with relevant groups (for example: agreements, Memorandum of Understanding etc.) proving active participation in decision-making processes
2. Report/documentation related to assessment of the effectiveness of stakeholders and rightholders engagement processes. Examples of variables that can be assessed include: number of consultations held, level of diversity of stakeholder groups engaged, perceived inclusiveness, level of participants' satisfaction, participants' diversity and representativeness, geographical accessibility of meetings, participants' attendance rates, participants' long-term engagement tracking, percentage of received comments from rights-holders and stakeholders are incorporated in the final output/document
3. Documents on the official establishment of stakeholder committee or similar mechanism and operational mechanisms that guide management planning, processes and actions

Generic Indicator 1.1.5

Governance arrangements help advance gender equity in relation to management of the site.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator assesses whether an MPA implements a gender-responsive approach that fosters participation of all genders into site management. A gender-responsive approach is a way of working that acknowledges and addresses the different needs, experiences, and perspectives of women, men, and gender non-conforming individuals. For example, this could be done by actively identifying the different groups with diverse gender perspectives and including them in decision-making, recognizing how different genders have different access to information and different decision-making power. An MPA might provide capacity building and leadership training for women to improve their ability to take their part in the MPA decision-making and management processes, capacity building in gender perspectives, amongst other measures.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documented evidence of efforts to assess potential gender related issues and maintain or improve gender equity within the MPA governance structure and within the management team (e.g. employment records, proportion of different genders by professional category, report on trends toward improved gender equity)
2. Trainings delivered by the MPA to ensure its administrative, technical and directive staff have received guidance on gender issues and on how to design projects integrating a gender approach
3. Specific communication and/or training programs to build capacities and leadership skills for women, delivered by the MPA
4. Ideally, integration of a proper gender approach within the MPA management plan or within specific action plans, and implementation of such actions
5. Gender equality action plan or equivalent document, to ensure equal opportunities by creating a formal strategy to address gender-based inequalities in the MPA's management and activities

Generic Indicator 1.1.6

The defined governance structures and mechanisms are accepted by major constituents (civil society, rights-holders and stakeholders), reflecting the governance category of the site

GUIDANCE & NOTES

MPA governance refers to the set of organizations, decision-making processes, and structures that shape the operational rules, rights, and responsibilities of actors within a spatially defined coastal or marine area [Mast et al. 2025]. It can be an entity (e.g., a regional or local administration, an NGO, a local community - see the four Governance General Categories of PA by IUCN below), that has been formally mandated by the competent authority (e.g., the Ministry of Environment) that established the MPA to oversee and manage it. The "mechanisms" are the formalized procedures through which this governance structure operates.

The term "accepted" is intended to verify whether the main stakeholder groups recognize the MPA's governing body as the legitimate entity responsible for managing the area.

The governance structure and mechanisms of protected areas can also be assessed with reference to the four general governance categories defined by IUCN as guidance, described as follows:

- **A. Governance by government:** Federal or national ministry/agency in charge; sub-national ministry/agency in charge; government-delegated management (e.g. to NGO);
- **B. Shared governance:** Collaborative management (various degrees of influence); joint management (pluralist management board); transboundary management (various levels across international borders);
- **C. Private governance:** By individual owner; by non-profit organisations (NGOs, universities, cooperatives); by for-profit organisations (individuals or corporate);
- **D. Governance by indigenous peoples and local communities:** indigenous peoples' conserved areas and territories; community conserved areas—declared and run by local communities

RESOURCES

"Governance of Protected Areas—From Understanding to Action" can be used as a specific guide to support MPA managers in establishing a stakeholder-friendly governance system. The guide serves as a practical framework for managers willing to prove such an inclusive approach in MPA governance. [Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013].

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation of formal or informal agreements and collaborations between the governance structures and the major constituent groups
2. Reports on the level of acceptance and/or support by constituents
3. Minutes and meeting attendance lists with key constituents

Small-scale fisher repairing his net, Cabo de Palos, Spain
© Kate Hogg

CRITERIA 1.2
ACHIEVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Generic Indicator 1.2.1

The governance structures and key documents on management are readily accessible to civil society in an easily understandable format. Key documents include the site's management plan or equivalent, relevant subsidiary plans and other key direction documents

GUIDANCE & NOTES

There is guaranteed access to information that is adequate in terms of quantity, quality and completeness regarding the governing bodies, the management process and results, with justification and accountability for each decision/result. Readily accessible means in a relevant way for all the local actors and stakeholders of the MPA (e.g. online where internet access is an option; on paper where the hard copy of the documents is reachable by all). The documents should be available in the primary language of the local communities and right-holders.

Examples of key documents that should be made readily accessible are provided below, however, one of these documents alone may be insufficient in meeting the indicator: the site's management plan or equivalent, relevant subsidiary plans and other key direction documents, monitoring reports, research studies, management effectiveness evaluations, meeting minutes of governing bodies, could be required to complete proving the alignment with the indicators.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Proof of public accessibility of the listed documents, records and other information (for example: publication records on websites, physical availability in offices and visitor centres, and evidence of distribution to the wider community)

Generic Indicator 1.2.2

Where a formal decision-making body exists, the current membership of the body is publicly available and procedures for establishment and membership of the body are publicly accessible, or where there is no decision-making body appointed, the names and contact details of formal decision-makers such as a Minister or Agency Director are publicly accessible

GUIDANCE & NOTES

The decision-making body should be understood as the individuals or groups responsible for making decisions, including participatory structures—such as stakeholder councils or stakeholder representative bodies—when these exist and take part in decision-making. The procedures for establishing these bodies and determining their membership should also be clearly documented and shared.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Proof of public availability of the current membership of any decision-making body for the site, in terms of number, members and the exact identity of each member
2. Proof that relevant details, related to the procedures for establishing the decision-making body and determining its membership, are publicly accessible

Nudibrach in Telascica Nature Park. © Danijel Kanski

Generic Indicator 1.2.3

The outcomes of discussions by decision-making bodies or decision-makers in relation to issues raised by civil society, rights-holders and stakeholders are publicly available

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Public availability may include online reporting or availability upon request and the documents should be available in the primary language of the local communities and right-holders

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Assessments and reports confirming there is appropriate, clear and regular communication of decisions from decision-making bodies or decision-makers

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Reports, endorsed by stakeholders, confirming there is an appropriate process in place
2. Dedicated and publicly available email address, telephone number or complaint form templates at visitors centres to report complaints, disputes or grievances
3. Rule of procedures to resolve disputes in a transparent way.
4. Reports and minutes of meetings, sessions and processes aimed at solving complaints, disputes or grievances
5. Reports on the number and nature of complaints received, along with actions taken to address them

Generic Indicator 1.2.4

A readily accessible process to identify, hear and resolve complaints, disputes or grievances related to the governance or management of the site is in place

GUIDANCE & NOTES

A "readily accessible" process to identify, hear and resolve complaints, disputes or grievances would include clear communication channels (i.e., that are publicly available, accessible and with multiple points of contact), specific avenues for reporting grievances, a transparent process for handling concerns, and a mechanism for independent review that ensures fairness and accountability.

"Readily accessible" means publicly available and understandable/usable. The documents and the process should be available in the primary language of the local communities and right-holders.

Ideally, the MPA would be responsible for the process. Generic contact points for "contacting the government" may not be accepted.

Cabo de Gata-Nijar, Spain © Kate Hogg

CRITERIA 1.3 ENABLE GOVERNANCE VITALITY AND CAPACITY TO RESPOND ADAPTIVELY

Generic Indicator 1.3.1

Procedures are in place to ensure that results from monitoring, evaluation and consultation are used to inform management and planning processes including the establishment of goals and objectives

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Procedures refer to systematic actions that use the outcomes of monitoring, evaluation and stakeholder consultations to inform management and planning processes, such as periodical revisions of management documents based on new evidence or information. For example, the results of field monitoring and enforcement activities are clearly presented in reports and/or discussed. These results should then guide and modify planning and management decisions. Formal reports should provide documentation on discussions and consultations outcomes, which should be made publicly accessible to ensure transparency and accountability.

The indicator concerns adaptive management, that can be defined as an iterative, learning-oriented decision-making framework applied within protected areas to ensure effective, goal-based conservation outcomes over time. This framework involves:

- Defining clear conservation objectives and desired outcomes
- Implementing and comparing alternative management actions
- Systematically monitoring ecological and social indicators
- Evaluating results and adjusting strategies based on what is learned
- This cycle enables managers to "learn while doing", continuously adapting interventions in response to new knowledge, changing conditions (e.g. climate, visitor use, ecological shifts), or stakeholder feedback. The process is rooted in transparency and broad participation. [Thomas & Middleton, 2003]

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Monitoring reports and management reports with recommendations on corrective management actions
2. Reports showing adaptive management processes (e.g., revised objectives and activities) based on monitoring, evaluation and consultation outcome

Generic Indicator 1.3.2

Planning and decision-making recognise relevant conditions, issues and goals at national and regional scales that impact the protected area

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator assesses whether relevant national governments' priorities, goals and ambitions are identified, understood and discussed to determine their relevance and applicability to the site management plans and decisions. The outcomes of these discussions and consultations should be documented in formal reports, which are made publicly accessible to ensure transparency and accountability.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation of planning processes (management plan or annual performance/ activity reports) in which all strategies (species, areas), territorial planning, sectoral policies, national and EU directives, that may have an impact on the marine protected area, are integrated

Generic Indicator 1.3.3

Planning and management processes draw on multiple knowledge sources (scientific, experiential, local and traditional knowledge).

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Not needed (self-explaining indicator).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation of planning processes clearly demonstrating knowledge sources and how they are sourced and used in decision-making processes. Examples of documentation of planning processes can be: management plan, annual plans/programs and activity reports including a section for "sources of information" reflecting clearly the sources of information used. Example of knowledge sources can be: reports from scientific committees, reports/ minutes on consultations meetings with local communities, stakeholders and experts

Small-scale fisher's gear shed, Cabo de Gata-Nijar, Spain. © K. Hogg

Generic Indicator 1.3.4

The site has, where relevant, considered historical changes and future projections in social, ecological and climate conditions

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Socio-economic changes in communities can account for, as an example, the shift from traditional livelihood means, changes in community demographics (e.g. aging of a specific group), population trends (e.g. relocation of youth towards urban areas), socio-economic changes due to COVID, new potential areas of blue growth (e.g. bio-mining), possible future predictions for change caused by climate change (e.g. extreme weather events, increased or reduced water availability, water acidification etc.).

MEANS OF VERIFICATIONS

1. References used for planning processes from monitoring plans, documents or relevant scientific papers and reports etc.
2. Management plans and/or activity plans (including other coastal zone management frameworks beyond MPAs, e.g. Marine Spatial planning Directive – MSP 2014/89/EU, National strategies) considering relevant past and ongoing changes within local communities and their possible impacts on the MPA, driving adaptive management
3. Assessment of potential risks and vulnerabilities of protected features in the light of projected climate change scenarios and associated extreme events. For example, assessment reports of climate change impacts on MPAs can be based on diverse methodologies developed in the context of different projects to help MPA managers assess their vulnerability to climate change, co-develop adaptation plans with local stakeholders, and monitor impacts in a harmonized way.

Component 2: SOUND DESIGN AND PLANNING

Introduction

The second Green List component ensures that the site's characteristics support the long-term conservation of its natural, ecosystemic, and cultural values. Conservation objectives must be based on a solid understanding of these core values.

The 'sound design and management component' assesses whether managers have sufficient and appropriate information to:

- Support effective planning to maintain the site's core values over time
- Address threats to these values
- Adapt to the impacts of global changes

In addition, the component assesses whether the local social and economic context is fully integrated into the site's planning, and whether the site aims to enhance local social and economic benefits when compatible with conservation objectives. Furthermore, conservation objectives must align with the protected area categories defined by IUCN and assigned to the site.

The 'sound design and planning' component Ensures that these considerations are taken into account in the preparation of the first and/or most recent MPA management plan. If some of these elements are missing in the management plan from the "design and planning" period, a specific action plan to comply with corresponding Green List indicators must be designed and implemented.

CRITERIA 2.1 IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND MAJOR SITE VALUES

Generic Indicator 2.1.1

The site meets the IUCN definition of a Protected Area and/or is recognised as a 'Conserved Area'

GUIDANCE & NOTES

A Protected Area = A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values, with clearly known and delineated boundaries (Nigel Dudley and Sue Stolton (eds) (2008)).

A Conserved Area = Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)= geographically defined areas other than a Protected Area, with clearly known and delineated boundaries, which are governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socioeconomic, and other locally relevant values. They achieve positive and sustained conservation outcomes in areas where conservation may not be the primary management objective [For additional information on OECMs refer to the IUCN Guidance on OECMs (Jonas et al., 2024)].

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Foundational documents used to manage the site or equivalent, for example management plans, ecosystems plans, national legislation and framework
2. Documented consultation with site management
3. Reference to IUCN Protected Area definition and IUCN guidance on Conserved Areas and 'Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures'

Generic Indicator 2.1.2

The site has been listed and correctly assigned one of the six IUCN Protected Area management categories, or has been listed as an 'Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure', and been assigned one of the four IUCN governance types in the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)

GUIDANCE & NOTES

The MPA should be included in the WDPA ; if the MPA is not registered in this database at the beginning of the GL process, it should send a requiry to focal points at its national level to intregrate it.

Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are geographically defined areas other than a Protected Area, which are governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socioeconomic, and other locally relevant values. They achieve positive and sustained conservation outcomes in areas where conservation may not be the primary management objective.

RESOURCES

- Guidelines for applying the IUCN protected area management categories to marine protected areas | IUCN Library System (Day et al., 2019)

IUCN PA Management Categories:
- Category Ia – strict nature reserve
- Category Ib – wilderness area
- Category II – national park
- Category III – natural monument or feature
- Category IV – habitat or species management area
- Category V – protected landscape or seascape
- Category VI – protected area with sustainable use of natural resource

- *Guidelines for Protected Areas: Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*, (Dudley et al., 2008).
- *Guidelines for MPAs: Guidelines for applying the IUCN protected area management categories to marine protected areas* (Day et al., 2019).
- Site-lebel tool for identifying other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) (Jonas et a., 2023)
- *Recognising and reporting other effective area-based conservation mesures* (IUCN-WCPA Task Force on OECMs, 2019)
- *Guidance on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)* (Jonas et al., 2024).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Reference to the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), with all data fields completed, accessible through the Protected Planet® portal, and action plan to provide details of the process of inclusion in the database or a justification of why is not included may be acceptable, in some cases (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2026).

Generic Indicator 2.1.3

The site has a current management plan or equivalent that is used to guide management priorities and activities

GUIDANCE & NOTES

The "management plan" is a key element of the MPA organization strategy and it describes how the organization is going to reach its goals/objectives. Where "Goals" are the results or the end points towards which organizational efforts are directed. "Strategy" is the specific plan used to meet the defined goal/objective.

A long-term management plan typically refers to a ≥ 5yrs time frame, which may include annual revisions/modifications.

A management plan may target key species and habitats to protect, identify and mitigate threats/pressures through planned regulations and activities, set conservation goals, management objectives and measurable targets as well as the means to achieve them within a timeline, and plan data collection of key ecological, social and economic variables in the MPA.

This indicator requires the existence of a management plan which should not yet expired, or is formally extended, that is legally binding, and that is still relevant and fully implemented.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management plan or equivalent
2. Work programmes and activities indicating conformity with management plan objectives and priorities

Generic Indicator 2.1.4

The major natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values of the site are clearly identified and understood.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator assesses if the main values and services of the MPA have been identified and understood, not all existing ones. The main values and services are usually those identified when the MPA is formally established, because they are the reason why the marine area was protected in the first place.

MPAs natural values refer to the key natural elements that are important for conservation and that justified the protection of a marine area. These include:

- Biodiversity, such as populations of threatened or endangered species
- Ecological processes, which support healthy and functioning ecosystems, and are the physical, chemical and biological actions or events that link organisms to their environment and that drive energy and material flows, population and community dynamics, and changes in ecosystem structure and function over time (e.g. primary production, respiration, decomposition, nutrient cycling, trophic transfers, reproduction, succession
- Rare, unique, or representative ecosystems (e.g. *Posidonia oceanica* meadows or coralligenous habitats)
- Areas with high species richness or endemism, where many species or unique species are found
- Significant geological features (e.g. hydrothermal vents or caves)
- Paleontological values, including fossil sites or other evidence of ancient life.

MPAs ecosystem services are the benefits that humans can derive from marine ecosystems within MPAs. These include provisioning services (e.g. food, fuel, energy); regulating services (e.g. water quality, carbon storage; shoreline stabilization), supporting services (e.g. nutrient cycling).

MPAs cultural values are tangible and non-tangible values that have aesthetic, spiritual, historical, recreational, scientific or social significance for past, present or future generations including that people associate with an MPA. For example: flora, fauna or minerals that have a cultural meaning. Even if the site's decision makers are not directly responsible for the conservation of tangible cultural heritage, they should nevertheless take into account both tangible and intangible cultural heritage in site management. For example, areas of spiritual significance should be considered within the site's zoning and access regulations.

RESOURCES

- To assess ecosystem services within a MPA, especially from the perspective of local stakeholder perceptions: *Protected Areas Benefits Assessment Tool + (PA-BAT+): A tool to assess local stakeholder perceptions of the flow of benefits from protected areas (Ivanić et al., 2020).* IUCN. xii + 84 pp
- *The Burra Charter*—the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013 offers a robust, values-centred structure for identifying and managing cultural values, emphasizing both tangible and intangible heritage and community involvement. While not specifically designed for marine environments, its principles can be successfully applied to MPAs by adapting its guidance to the distinctive nature of marine cultural heritage (Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Foundational documents or equivalent
2. Management plan or equivalent
3. Scientific research papers
4. Related databases
5. Reports on traditional and local knowledge
6. Feedback from stakeholders

Posidonia oceanica meadows provide key ecosystem services, biodiversity support, and cultural and economic benefits. © Charis Dimitriadis

CRITERIA 2.2
DESIGN FOR LONG-TERM CONSERVATION OF MAJOR SITE VALUES

Generic Indicator 2.2.1

The designated site is large enough and sufficiently connected to other habitats or ecosystems to achieve the goals and objectives for the site's major values for nature conservation

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator questions if the MPA is large enough and connected enough to its surrounding natural habitats to include representative habitats and species, key habitat replicates, and areas that support different life stages of target species and ecological processes.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management planning documentation and maps
2. References to scientific research justifying conclusions, for example studies /diagnosis on marine connectivity if existent
3. Consultation with site management and experts

Generic Indicator 2.2.2

The site is part of an identified conservation network which is designed to meet goals of representation, replication, connectivity and resilience.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

MPA Network definition: A collection of individual marine protected areas specifically designed to operate cooperatively and synergistically, at various spatial scales, and with a range of protection levels, to fulfil ecological aims more effectively and comprehensively than individual sites could alone.

Any type of network—geographical, administrative or ecological—could potentially fulfil the indicator, as far as the goals listed by the indicator are taken under consideration by the existing network the MPA is part of, thus contributing to an ecologically representative and well-connected system of protected areas.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management planning documentation including maps
2. Site system plan or gap analysis
3. Consultation with site management

Telascica Nature Park, Croatia.
© Darko Mihalic

Generic Indicator 2.2.3

Where a major site value is 'ecological integrity':
• The site contains an assemblage of native species and ecosystem types that is characteristic of the region, with intact ecological processes and trophic systems
• The site is large enough and sufficiently well connected to sustain a viable species population and ecosystem processes in the long term

Where a major site value is the conservation of a species:
• The site contains the full range of habitats required to sustain a viable population of the species or the ecological community in the long term, taking account of all relevant aspects of the species' life cycle (e.g. breeding areas, wintering grounds, safe migration routes)
• The site is large enough and sufficiently well connected to sustain a viable population of the species in the long term

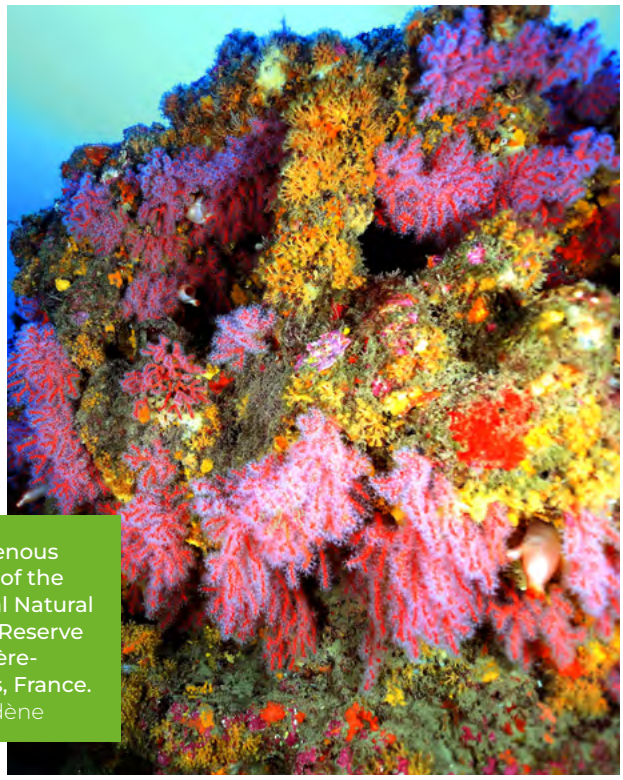
Or, where the species range is too large to be protected within one designated area:
• The site is designed to protect one or more critical life history stages for a species. e.g. feeding, breeding, resting, migratory path / bottleneck
• The site contains sufficient areas of the key habitats that support the critical life history stage of the species
•The site is sufficiently well connected to other protected or managed areas that contain habitats the species needs to complete its life history

GUIDANCE & NOTES

"Ecological processes" are the physical, chemical and biological actions or events that link organisms to their environment and that drive energy and material flows, population and community dynamics, and changes in ecosystem structure and function over time (e.g. primary production, respiration, decomposition, nutrient cycling, trophic transfers, reproduction, succession).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Maps of site and surrounding area with specific information about habitats
2. Management planning documentation
3. References to relevant scientific research, whether or not commissioned by the management authority, providing justification for the conclusions
4. Specific research projects on species and/or ecosystem types and/or results from specific and local projects on species habitat and ecosystems need to support planning, zoning and management decisions
5. Consultation with relevant experts and documents/reports of specific suggestions from experts.



Coraligenous habitat of the National Natural Marine Reserve of Cerbère-Banyuls, France. © F. Cadène

CRITERIA 2.3 UNDERSTAND THREATS AND CHALLENGES TO MAJOR SITE VALUES

Generic Indicator 2.3.1

Major current and potential threats to major natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values of the site are identified, understood and documented, and their location, extent and severity described in sufficient detail to enable effective planning and management to address them

GUIDANCE & NOTES

For the definition of natural values, associated ecosystem services and cultural values, please see the guidance and notes of the indicator 2.1.4.

MPAs natural values and associated ecosystem services face a large variety of potential threats, including: overfishing, poaching, climate change, pollution or invasive species. Associated threats to MPAs cultural values can include: rapid coastal urbanization and mass tourism, e.g., development of infrastructure, and/or recreational activities with high potential impact, loss of symbolic habitats and traditional ecosystems, and decline of local know-how and associated intangible cultural heritage.

Assessing threats to MPA cultural values can be done by: 1) producing participatory maps to locate vulnerable cultural sites and practices, 2) assessing local pressures—such as tourism, urbanization, and coastal infrastructure—using the DPSIR (Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response) framework for instance, 3) setting indicators for monitoring purposes—such as visitation, 4) engaging communities through participatory approaches to develop an accurate picture of threats and cultural priorities.

RESOURCES

- The IUCN Red List's Threats Classification Scheme can be used to assess threats to the MPA natural values and associated ecosystem services.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management plan or equivalent listing threats for each major value
2. Documentation of consultation with relevant experts that includes expert recommendations
3. Reports on pressures and threats within existing EU legislative frameworks such as the Nature Directives, Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
4. Documented methods and processes for identifying threats; methods can include: threat modelling, the '3 why's' exercise to identify root causes, fishing risk analysis on species and habitats.

Generic Indicator 2.3.2

The likely impact of climate change on the major site values has been assessed, understood and documented.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Major site values should include natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values, as requested by indicator 2.1.4.

RESOURCES

- *Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas and climate change: A guide to regional monitoring and adaptation opportunities.* (Otero et al., 2013).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management plan or equivalent documenting climate change threats
2. Report on climate change impact based on scientific methodology
3. Document that substantiates the connection between a general report on climate change impacts at the regional level and site-specific conditions.

CRITERIA 2.4 UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Generic Indicator 2.4.1

The social and economic characteristics of the region that may be affected (positively or negatively) by the site's designation and/or current management have been identified and the location, extent and magnitude of effects of the site on social and economic characteristics have been described in the management plan or equivalent

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator focuses on two main aspects:
1) confirming the identification of the socio-economic characteristics of the area where the MPA has been established;

2) describing the MPA-driven impacts on identified socio-economic assets, in terms of location (where the socio-economic impacts are felt), extent, and magnitude (how "deep and widespread" the resulting socio-economic impacts are).

The social and economic context is always site-specific. The following are examples of areas to consider when identifying the socio-economic characteristics of a site, as well as the potential impacts of an MPA:

- Fisheries: Negative impacts may occur through displacement of the activity, while positive impacts may result from increased catch due to protection and regeneration of fish stocks.
- Tourism: the establishment of the MPAs may increase the attractiveness of the area to tourists, boosting the local economy (e.g., increase in local income), but may also increase pressure on infrastructure and natural resources (e.g., negative impact of the anchoring on the Posidonia meadow or overtourism).
- Community Dynamics: MPAs can lead to changes in livelihoods—both positive (e.g., eco-tourism, job creation, support in developing site-linked value chains such as pesca-tourism) and negative (e.g., reduced access to traditional resources).
- Stakeholder Engagement: Positive outcomes may include increased support and a sense of ownership if stakeholders are included in MPA management and decision-making. However, negative impacts can arise if stakeholder dynamics are altered or certain groups are excluded, limiting access to the site and its ecosystem services.
- Public Perceptions: MPAs can increase environmental awareness, stewardship, and appreciation of their bequest value.

It is likely that during the designation or planning phase, the main socio-economic assets were identified and an assessment of potential impacts was conducted. If this was not done at the time, it is still possible to perform this analysis during the application process.

RESOURCES

- Examples and methods of easy-to-apply "measure unit/tools" for measuring impacts on economic and socio-cultural assets can be found in: *Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability.* (Leung et al., 2018)

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Baseline of the local socio-cultural context with the development of the list and characterization of the local economic activities
2. Social/cultural impact report(s) and/or assessment(s)
3. Management plan or equivalent with specific references to the local social and economic characteristics
4. Stakeholder engagement plan and evaluation

Generic Indicator 2.4.2

The social and economic benefits and effects have been considered in the development of management goals and objectives for the site in the management plan or equivalent

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator invites you to highlight if the socio-economic benefits - identified in 2.4.1. - have been integrated into the development of the MPA goals and objectives. Here are examples of MPAs socio-economic benefits:

- Enhanced sustainable livelihoods and economic growth maintaining a healthy marine environment
- Mitigation of adverse impacts on existing livelihoods and the development of diversified and innovative income streams
- Protection and continuity of traditional fishing grounds and practices
- Growth of eco-tourism and marine-based recreation, generating increased local revenue and employment opportunities
- Equitable distribution of benefits, costs and responsibilities, ensuring that the socio-economic advantages of MPAs are shared fairly among all community members.

RESOURCES

- Examples and methods of easy-to-apply tools for measuring impacts on economic and socio-cultural assets can be found in: *Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability.* (Leung et al., 2018).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Reports on socio-economic assessments of benefits and impacts (e.g. resource use, traditional knowledge, community perceptions, economic activities, and cultural significance) have been considered/included in the management plan or equivalent
2. Consultation with appropriate representatives of potentially affected rights-holders and other stakeholders

Orca, whale watching vessel and traditional fishers in the Straight of Gibraltar.
© J. Postigo

Component 3: EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The third Green List component focuses on the management systems and processes in place within an MPA.

The component assesses whether an MPA candidate is:

- Providing clear and appropriate management guidelines for the short, medium, and long-term perspective
- Demonstrating adequate and effective management capacity
- Implementing plans and actions to maintain ecosystem processes and associated natural and cultural values
- Carrying out management activities aimed at enhancing the site's social and economic benefits
- Capable of addressing existing and potential threats
- Effectively and fairly enforcing laws and regulations
- Managing access, resource use, and visitor activities
- Equipped with monitoring and evaluation systems to measure success (dashboard, indicators, etc.)

CRITERIA 3.1
DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Generic Indicator 3.1.1

The site has a current management plan or functional equivalent which includes: a) the goals and objectives for management of the natural values and social and / or economic objectives (where relevant) identified in Component 2 b) the management strategies and activities to achieve these goals over the long term and an indication of the activities that are allowed or prohibited in the site and any zoning or temporal / spatial restrictions on access to or use of the site

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator builds on the prior assessment of whether the site has a current management plan or functional equivalent. It specifically evaluates whether that plan includes clearly defined goals and objectives, along with detailed management strategies and activities designed to achieve them.

The management plan (or equivalent) may apply to either long-term (i.e., at least five years) or short-term (e.g., annual or biannual) timeframes, ideally subject to annual revision. It should also incorporate species recovery plans for relevant species, as well as an overarching conservation plan.

The management objectives and strategies related to the site's natural values must be clearly defined, measurable, achievable, practical, relevant, and tailored to each natural value. They should also be set within a specific implementation timeline.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Formal approval of the management plan or equivalent
2. Management plan or functional equivalent documenting (i) major natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values (2.1); (ii) threats to these values (2.3); (iii) likely impact of climate change on values (2.4); (iv) MPA goals and objectives and management actions
3. Evidence of consultation processes

Traditional small-scale net fisheries in Mediterranean MPAs. © Charis DImitriadis

Generic Indicator 3.1.2

The site can demonstrate that management activities and policies, and/or legislation and regulations are being implemented and are consistent with the management plan (or equivalent)

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator assesses whether management activities, policies, and regulations are implemented and consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the MPA's management plan.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Periodical work plan or equivalent
2. Annual activity/achievement reports (including progress tracking, such as the annual percentage of completed actions by section)

Generic Indicator 3.1.3

Adequate, functional and safe equipment and infrastructure is available and accessible to staff as appropriate to manage the site.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator evaluates whether the site is equipped with adequate, functional, safe, accessible, and appropriate equipment and infrastructure to support effective MPA management. It is acknowledged that, in many cases, resources may be provided by third parties or shared among multiple sites. These arrangements should be assessed to determine whether they sufficiently support the operational needs of the site in question. Any relevant partnerships or agreements should be noted and ideally be formalized.

Examples of relevant infrastructure and equipment include office space, computers, technology, binoculars, boats, and dive equipment:

- Adequate resources are those sufficient for carrying out required tasks (e.g., a sufficient number of boats, tools, and communication devices

to cover the area and activities effectively).
- Functional refers to equipment and infrastructure being in reliable working condition, supported by regular maintenance and checks to ensure short- and long-term operability.
- Safe implies compliance with health and safety standards, with equipment and infrastructure designed and maintained to minimize risks to staff. This also encompasses proper training on safe equipment use.
- Accessible means that equipment and infrastructure are situated and organized to be easily reached and used by staff when needed, including considerations for staff with disabilities (e.g., proper storage and clear signage).
- Appropriate resources are those that are specifically suited to the tasks associated with MPA management (e.g., specialized vehicles for challenging terrain or tools designed for marine monitoring).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation which may include photos, maintenance schedules for major equipment, visual inspections, etc.
2. Inventory of infrastructure & equipment
3. Evidence of staff training to use equipment
4. Evidence of established partnerships (e.g. resource sharing, remote monitoring technology)
5. Annual activity report and work program

Generic Indicator 3.1.4

The site has adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff, led by an effective management team, to implement all aspects of its management plan in the long term

GUIDANCE & NOTES

"Adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff" refer to a structured management team with assigned tasks, able to effectively implement the MPA management plan and its strategies (e.g. conservation, compliance, enforcement). The team should receive adequate training to be able to effectively implement the activities included in the management plan.

If agreements have been made with other organizations to compensate for an internal shortage of human resources, these partnership agreements should be mentioned and ideally be formalized.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Staff organisational chart and documents showing number of employees and if there are full-time or part-time
2. Report on discussions with staff and local knowledgeable experts
3. Documents about the training programmes available /completed
4. MPA site specific staff capacity evaluation. For example: a report after assessing competencies, specialization, and roles in relation to management goals (e.g., biological monitoring, education, stakeholder engagement). Refer to the IUCN publication: A Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners (Appleton, 2016).
5. Annual report of training activities (e.g. national or international meetings, workshops, capacity building courses and contribution to scientific or technical publications relevant to environmental conservation and management)

Generic Indicator 3.1.5

Management efforts support equity, including gender equity, related to site management

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Although indicators 1.1.5 and 3.1.5 are linked, they have different focuses:
- Indicator 1.1.5 focuses on governance arrangements to help advance gender equity in relation to the management of the site, i.e. achieving gender equity in governance and decision-making structures.
- Indicator 3.1.5 focuses on management efforts to promote equity. This includes considering the use of, access to, and dependence on marine resources by women and other

vulnerable groups when designing management interventions within MPAs. It also involves integrating equity-focused goals and objectives into MPA planning, addressing equity issues within the management plan, and measuring and reporting gender-disaggregated data, where relevant.

Equity considerations extend beyond gender to include factors such as age, ethnicity, disability, and other dimensions of vulnerability.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Proof of efforts supporting gender equity, for example through a specific policy, and observed trends
2. Annual report that provides evidence of efforts to implement gender-responsive approaches, management strategies/ activities providing opportunities for training and capacity-building opportunities tailored to address equity issues, prove that conservation efforts/activities are being tailored to address gender/equity-specific needs and priorities
3. Reports from stakeholder engagement & changes made to management strategies that provide proof that activities are being guided by diverse knowledge and perspectives
4. Reports of gender/equity specific data collection methods to track progress towards equity/equality
5. Reports that show evidence that management actions are strengthening livelihoods through income-generating activities also for marginalised sectors of society
6. Reports that show evidence of women's empowerment in leadership roles within MPA management

Generic Indicator 3.1.6

Financial constraints are not threatening the capacity of management to achieve the site's objectives

GUIDANCE & NOTES

As examples, financial constraints can include: insufficient core funding for basic operations, staff salaries, fuel; unreliable funding sources such as reliance on grants or donor funding, project based funding; lack of long-term sustainable funding; high operational costs especially in large areas or areas with high visitor numbers that require more surveillance and monitoring; lack of financial expertise within the MPA to efficiently manage available budget.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Reports or information on implementation of annual work programmes
2. Discussion with staff and local knowledgeable experts
3. Financial plan and/or financial report that illustrates if existing funds are aligned with the achievable and current objectives of the MPA (identified within the indicators 1.3.1.), and evaluates operational costs
4. Trend in the annual budget of the MPA for the last 5 years (or more)
5. Report on any funding reductions and their impacts on routine activities

Divers monitoring natural values of the National Natural Marine Reserve of Cerbère-Banyuls, France. © D. Fioramonti

CRITERIA 3.2 MANAGE ECOLOGICAL CONDITION

Generic Indicator 3.2.1

Strategies and actions to maintain ecological attributes and processes (including natural disturbances) to maintain or enhance the site's major values are identified and implemented

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Ecological attributes are elements of the environment that are important for biodiversity or ecosystem function and integrity. They may relate to a species or community (e.g., a predator that provides a large biomass or the number of species), an important habitat type (e.g., that supports high productivity or aggregations of nesting or breeding animals), or a unique seafloor feature that positively impacts the surrounding ecosystem (e.g., a deep canyon that stimulates upwellings of nutrient-rich water).

Ecological processes sustain biodiversity including: climatic processes, primary productivity, hydrological processes, formation of biophysical habitats, interactions between species, movements of organisms and natural disturbance regimes. Anthropogenic threats to conservation exert their influence by modifying or disrupting these processes. Additionally, human activities can exacerbate natural disturbances that are already in place.

For more information about Key natural elements, see indicator 2.4.1.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management plan or equivalent, and in particular the objective, strategies and activities reported in the management plan, ideally including specific sections on ecological processes
2. Annual work plan or equivalent
3. Annual activity report (specifying references to conservation strategies and action)
4. Consultation with site managers and experts

Generic Indicator 3.2.2

The site can demonstrate that management activities related to natural values are being implemented and are sufficient for the maintenance of the site's major natural values and ecological processes

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator involves a thorough analysis of the conservation status based on the targeted management actions that have been implemented, based on the application of clearly defined goals and objectives, explaining the cause-and-effect relationships on the conservation status of the major natural values identified in indicator 2.1.4, if they can be documented.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management plan or equivalent
2. Consultation with site managers
3. Report or publications about MPA effectiveness
4. Annual activity report
5. Monitoring and evaluation reports, for example, results from the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) (Stolton & Dudley, 2016).

CRITERIA 3.3
MANAGE WITHIN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF THE AREA

Generic Indicator 3.3.1

The social and economic context of the site has been incorporated into management, based on consideration of social and economic goals and objectives for the site, as established in Criterion 2.4

GUIDANCE & NOTES

As detailed above the social and economic context is always site-specific. Economic goals and objectives can and should be supported as long as they are not of detriment to the site's natural and cultural values, and ecosystem services. The following provides some areas that should be considered/ included when socio-economic goals of an MPA are set:

- Fisheries (acknowledging/addressing potential negative impacts of displacement and/ or enhancing positive impacts through increased catch)
- Tourism (attracting tourists to boost the local economy and/or ensuring measures to mitigate the increasing pressure on infrastructure and natural resources)
- Other industries (e.g., if new legislation restricts certain activities (aquaculture, mining etc.))
- Community dynamics (e.g., change in livelihoods and access to resources)
- Stakeholder engagement (stakeholders included in MPA management and decision making, increasing support, stewardship, and appreciation of the bequest value)
- Public perceptions (increasing environmental awareness and stewardship and appreciation of the bequest value)

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Management plan (if it includes a socieconomic analysis) or socioeconomic plan
2. Annual work plan or equivalent
3. Section of the annual activity report (or any equivalent document) that lists the actions related to the consideration of the socioeconomic goals and objectives of the area
4. Strategies or action plans relevant to the site that include social and economic aspects of the site
5. Reports evaluating the extent to which the social and economic context has been effectively incorporated into the management plan

Generic Indicator 3.3.2

Opportunities to enhance the social and economic benefits of the site to local communities (where consistent with conservation of major site values) are considered during reviews of management plan and through adaptive governance, management and planning processes

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Potential opportunities to enhance social and economic benefits of MPAs to local communities may include:

- Territorial user rights for "local" fishers (distinguishing professional small scale fisheries and recreational fisheries) or local traditional practices
- Similar licensing system to "protect user rights" for the tourism sector (local dive clubs/ businesses have priority or exclusive access)
- MPA eco-labelling
- Licenses for pesca-tourism
- Economic benefits for local profitable activities (improved environmental conditions that translate into increased catches/increased willingness to pay for dive experiences etc.)
- Bequest value for future generations (sense of well-being).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Reports from management's consultation with local stakeholders and rights-holders and community members
2. Management plan or equivalent
3. Proves of discussions with local stakeholders and community members
4. Results of studies exploring opportunities for enhanced social and economic benefits
5. Strategies and action plans relevant to protected area development that capture opportunities for social/economic benefits and impacts

CRITERIA 3.4
MANAGE THREATS

Generic Indicator 3.4.1

The site management is implementing a work programme that identifies effective responses to each of the major threats to (a) major site values identified under Criterion 2.3 or (b) the achievement of the site's goals and objectives including long term and 'external' threats

GUIDANCE & NOTES

These threats could be impacting the natural values of the site or the associated ecosystem services and cultural value, thereby impacting the site's ability to achieve its goals and objectives. 'External' threats can include threats that are beyond the boundaries and direct influence of the site, such as climate change or invasive species, displacement of fishing efforts and other extractive uses as well as overtourism that take place beyond the MPA boundary. While the ability of the MPA to reduce these threats may be limited as actions to address them may be beyond the jurisdiction and competencies of the MPA, MPAs can demonstrate they are doing what is in their power to address them. For example, collaborating in research to mitigate climate change impacts, integrating climate considerations in the management of the site, or engaging with and collaborating with relevant sectoral actors.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Annual work plan or equivalent
2. Management plan or equivalent, such as: management effectiveness reports, monitoring and evaluation reports. In the annual activity report (or any equivalent document), list the actions implemented in response to the threats identified in 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.
3. Evidence of discussions with local stakeholders and community members, both during informal and formal meetings. These could be used to help identify the threats, getting to the root cause of the threat which the MPA has the jurisdiction to address. Discussions with stakeholders and community members can be used to verify whether the MPAs activities/actions/strategies are being (well) implemented and if they are addressing the threats identified or that need to be addressed.
4. Evidence of consultation with relevant experts. The same strategy outlined above can be used during consultations with experts to verify if the threats and their root causes have been correctly identified and if the planned actions can and are successfully addressing the threats identified.

Invasive alien species are a major threat to biodiversity. Lion fish (aquarium). © J Postigo

CRITERIA 3.5 EFFECTIVELY AND FAIRLY ENFORCE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Generic Indicator 3.5.1

Patrol and surveillance systems, or equivalent, are in place where needed, are adequately set up with sufficient resources and effective operational procedures

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Patrol and surveillance systems can include: patrolling, surveillance using technology (AIS, radar, drones, georeferenced cameras). "Where needed" means these are strategically deployed in areas of high risk or sensitivity.

"Adequately set-up" means the systems in place are sufficient to deter illegal activities to a level that enables the MPA to meet its conservation goals and management objectives (i.e., well defined enforcement program, sufficient resources, appropriate technology, effective enforcement). "Equivalent" acknowledges that different MPAs may have different needs or methods for patrol and surveillance. For example, patrol and surveillance systems or equivalent in the marine setting can encompass: dedicated MPA staff with or without 'police' status, trained rangers, third parties hired by/for the MPA to carry out dedicated surveillance, use of technology (cameras, AIS and VMS tracking etc.) and/or the coordinated efforts of different authorities that make up part of the surveillance system (e.g., maritime police, coast guards etc.). These strategies can all include both on land and on water surveillance (surveillance from shore with binoculars, shore patrols, on water patrols etc.).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Plan, records and/or reports of patrol and surveillance strategies and activities, including frequency and coverage of key areas
2. Documentation of appropriate system of management of patrol and surveillance data, for example reports and trend of violations and sanctions over the last 5 years
3. Evidence of agreements for coordinated actions between the MPA and different authorities or third parties implementing vigilance measures"
4. Minutes or other evidence of coordination meetings between the MPA and authorities implementing vigilance measures.

Generic Indicator 3.5.2

Legal or customary compliance mechanisms are supported including the equitable application of appropriate sanctions to offenders

GUIDANCE & NOTES

The legal or customary compliance mechanisms may be supported by different institutions with overlapping jurisdictions. While these systems can involve the MPA staff, where they are legally empowered to enforce regulations, legal compliance mechanisms can also rely on third parties.

Equitable application requires that sanctions, designed to deter future violations, are imposed consistently and fairly, irrespective of the offenders' background or social status and are proportionate to the severity of the offence.

The focus of this indicator is to demonstrate whether mechanisms are in place to ensure that breaches of legislation relevant to the site are addressed adequately and appropriately, and that equitable and appropriate sanctions can, and are, administered (by the MPA when authorized or by the appropriate authorities). This can include coordination mechanisms across overlapping jurisdictions to ensure that sanctions are fairly applied and are proportionate to the offence to deter the violator or others from similar actions in the future.

Sanctions can include official warnings, fines and arrest/detention depending on the gravity of the offence, the legal status of the MPA as well as the relevant national legislation.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation of compliance and enforcement system (i.e., law or regulation)
2. Evidence of a structured framework for compliance mechanisms that ensures appropriate actions are taken in response to offences, with decision-making involving more than one person (i.e., the full procedure from the drafting of the official report to the final decision: established policies and procedures, ongoing training, risk assessments, and monitoring and auditing processes)
3. Annual report containing evidence of all offences
4. Record of the results of prosecutions
5. Actions to communicate enforcement issues to the broader public

Generic Indicator 3.5.3

Laws and regulations regarding the use of the site are accessible to civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders

GUIDANCE & NOTES

When completing this indicator, consider how the rules and regulations of the MPA are shared/communicated with civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders. For example, whether the MPA has a website where the rules and regulations can be consulted, the MPA has signage that illustrates activities permitted/prohibited, there are marker buoys with signage that show limitations of the MPA/zones and activities permitted/prohibited, the boundaries of the MPA are incorporated in navigational charts, the MPA ensures that the rules and regulations are made accessible in numerous formats that consider literacy levels, internet access levels etc.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Proof of publicly accessible legal and regulatory information (orders, texts)
2. Evidence of appropriate signage implementation
3. Navigation charts displaying zoning and regulations
4. Evidence of leaflets, applications, interactive maps, relevant URL links

CRITERIA 3.6
MANAGE ACCESS, RESOURCE USE AND VISITATION

Generic Indicator 3.6.1

The types and levels of permitted activities are clearly described, and are compatible with the conservation of major site values

GUIDANCE & NOTES

When completing this indicator, consideration should be given on how clearly the "types" and "levels" of activities are described in the management plan, or equivalent documents, in line with the laws and regulations outlined under indicator 3.5.3. For example, whether the activities permitted are outlined in detail: what type of fishing is allowed in certain areas, where diving is permitted and what limitations there are, how many boats can be anchored on a mooring, what speed can vessels navigate through the MPA, etc.

As clarified in the Green List Standard version 1.1 approved activities may include permitted sustainable harvesting of natural resources that are in accordance with any restrictions and guidelines contained in the site's management plan or other policies or documents (IUCN & WCPA, 2017). For example, small scale fisheries in relevant zones, approved scientific research and other activities regulated by permits.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documented description of permitted uses in management plan or equivalent
2. Consultation with site managers
3. Consultation with relevant experts
4. MPA legislation/decrees
5. MPA zoning with description of permitted activities and use/access

Generic Indicator 3.6.2

Where use and access are permitted:
• Uses and access are managed to minimise harm to the major site values, for example through permits, design, access control, or education
• The site's management strives to accommodate the needs of users, so far as this is compatible with the achievement of site objectives

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator (3.6.2) focuses on uses and access for all types of permitted activities, whereas 3.6.4 that follows focuses on managing visitor access specifically. Therefore, 3.6.2 should focus on uses other than visitation, such as small-scale fishing in relevant zones.

This indicator assesses how access to and use of the MPA is managed, taking into account the various user groups, their reasons for accessing the area, and the mechanisms in place to regulate such access. Consideration should be given to how different activities are controlled or restricted.

For example, in the case of no-take or no-access zones, it should be specified whether researchers are required to obtain a permit or license to gain access. Similarly, it should be indicated whether diving is restricted to designated sites, whether commercial fisheries is limited to licensed local fishers with territorial rights, whether recreational fishers are required to hold a license, and whether businesses such as kayak tour operators must obtain permits to operate within the MPA.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Reference to site rules, bylaws, etc.
2. Records of meetings of governing bodies, management committees, etc.
3. Discussions with local stakeholders and community members
4. Report of those discussions with local community needs, especially with stakeholders affected by restrictions
5. Documented description of permitted user access in management plan or equivalent, or tourism management plan. MPA legislation/decree and other relevant planning documents
6. Consultation with site managers
7. Impact studies and/or user records
8. Consultation with experts
9. MPA zoning with description of permitted activities and use/access

Generic Indicator 3.6.3

The nature and level of permitted access for visitors are clearly described and are compatible with the conservation of major site values and objectives

GUIDANCE & NOTES

It is well known that monitoring and controlling access to the marine environment is generally more challenging than in terrestrial areas. However, where applicable, this indicator should be completed with consideration of how visitors access the site, the purposes of their visits, and whether these activities are compatible with conservation objectives. For example, access may occur from the shore or via boats, kayaks, or another watercraft.

Indicators 3.6.3 and 3.6.4 are complementary to 3.6.3, which defines. 3.6.3 defines the basic conditions for access and visitors permits, while 3.6.4 establishes the specific conditions and requirements that apply to visitors.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. MPA decree, order, rule, bylaw, etc. that outlines MPA permitted use/legislation
2. Documented description of permitted visitor access in management plan or equivalent, or tourism management plan. Specify where these documents are publicly accessible. For example: the protected area's website, tourist office, municipal bulletin board, State administrative records, local and regional newspapers, etc.
3. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) reports for approved activities and plans within the area, including transport-related infrastructure and cumulative impact assessments
4. Monitoring reports on: site visits and/or structured data on visitor records (e.g., numbers and profiles), and their potential impacts
5. Consultation with site managers
6. Consultation with experts

Management of access, zonification and information is crucial for users in MPA. Information Panel in Isola di Ustica MPA, Italy. © K. Hogg

Generic Indicator 3.6.4

Where visitor access is permitted:
- **Visitor impacts are managed to minimise harm to major site values, for example through permits, access control, the provision and siting of facilities, education and enforcement**
- **There is no evidence that the impacts of visitors are majorly threatening the achievement of the site's objectives**
- **Visitor services and facilities are appropriate to the character, values and use of the site**
- **Visitor services and facilities meet specified safety standards**
- **Visitor services and facilities meet reasonable standards of environmental sustainability**
- **Interpretive, educational and information services for visitors meet visitors' needs (e.g. the needs of different audiences or age groups)**
- **The tourism industry within the site is managed to support the site's objectives**
- **Consideration has been given to the use of the site by disadvantaged people, and their needs have been adequately taken into account**

GUIDANCE & NOTES

While Indicator 3.6.2 addresses all types of permitted uses and access within the MPA, Indicator 3.6.4 specifically focuses on the management of visitor access (e.g., related facilities and infrastructure). This indicator should therefore be completed with an emphasis on how visitor access is managed and the potential impacts of visitor activities.

In assessing this indicator, consideration should be given to whether visitor presence or behaviour is affecting the site's ability to achieve its conservation objectives. It should also be noted whether strategies or measures are in place to manage visitor access and whether metrics exist to monitor visitor-related impacts.

When using carrying capacity studies, it is important to demonstrate a clear link between visitor numbers and specific negative impacts. However, it is equally important to assess impacts independently of visitor numbers, to

allow detection of effects even when visitation levels fluctuate. Studies may consider different dimensions of carrying capacity, including physical, ecological, social, and economic factors.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documented description of provisions for visitor management (e.g. legislation, government decisions, action plans, management plans)
2. Visitor records or estimates
3. Visitor response surveys
4. Consultation with site managers
5. Consultation with experts
6. Consultation with representatives of local community
7. Consultation with representatives of tourism industry within the site's boundaries
8. Report or other documentation in relation to the provision made for access by, and responses to the needs of disabled and disadvantaged people
9. Impact studies and visitors' records including carrying capacity
10. Documented description of permitted visitor access in management plan or equivalent, or tourism management plan
11. Assessment and quantification of the information provided to visitors prior to entering the MPA (e.g., through tourist offices, the MPA's website, or dedicated smartphone applications).

Mediterranean moray in Telascica Nature Park. © D. Kanski

CRITERIA 3.7
MEASURE SUCCESS

Generic Indicator 3.7.1

For each of the major site values identified under Criterion 2.1, a monitoring system is in place, and a set of performance measures has been defined and documented, which provides an objective basis for determining whether the associated value is being successfully protected.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

Section 2.1 outlines whether the major site values have been identified, including natural values, ecosystem services, and cultural values. Indicator 3.7.1 requires verification of the following:

- The existence of dedicated monitoring programs that track changes in the major site values over time. Monitoring programs for natural values can include census, acoustic methods, mark-recapture methods or plants mapping, among others. For ecosystem services or cultural values the monitoring of human activities or behaviours within the MPA can be appropriate.
- The presence of performance measures, metrics, or variables capable of assessing the conservation status of each major site value. These are the variables collected on the monitoring programs and can include ecological indicators to monitor species abundance, and habitat condition, as well as socio-economic indicators to evaluate fishing effort, community well-being, and livelihoods.

For the first aspect, applicants must demonstrate the ability to describe the status of the MPA's values at present and, if available, provide historical data. The primary objective of this indicator is to encourage applicants to establish a stable and effective monitoring system.

For the second aspect, applicants should identify key parameters—preferably a limited number—that comprehensively represent the major site values and enable assessment of the status of each value.

RESOURCES

- Examples of easy-to-apply monitoring systems can be found in the *IUCN guide How is your MPA doing?* Pomeroy et al., (2005)
- To identify suitable tools to measure conservation targets and their associated key ecological attributes, see Parrish et al., (2003)
- For examples of performance indicators see Cardoso-Andrade et al. (2002)

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Minutes or reports of discussion with site managers
2. Minutes or reports of consultation with relevant experts
3. Set of performance measures adopted and implemented
4. Monitoring programme documentation, including the dashboards for implementing monitoring actions.

Generic Indicator 3.7.2

A threshold level has been specified and assessed in relation to each set of performance measures that relate to natural values, that if achieved, is considered to demonstrate objectively that the associated major site value is being successfully conserved. As appropriate, threshold determination can include the assessment of conservation impact based on change in major values over a specified time span compared to those anticipated without the protected and conserved area

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator requires definition of thresholds to monitor the MPA's performance against each of the identified major site's values. Where possible (and at least for natural and ecosystem-related indicators), thresholds should be quantifiable and justified. Thresholds will rarely be absolute and may be refined as knowledge improves. Additionally, thresholds should be adjusted to ensure they are realistic and needed and should be used to guide adaptive management strategies.

Thresholds can be established in many ways, including: applying values taken from scientific literature, analysis of past measurements, ecological modelling, values set by legislation or regulation and/or expert consensus. In all cases, the reasons for selecting thresholds should be documented as part of the monitoring programme. Thresholds must be tailored to be specific to the ecological and social context of the site.

If the scientific information needed to establish quantifiable thresholds is lacking or inadequate, site managers can rely on general ecological concepts, comparisons to other similar systems, or well-informed expert opinion. Failing that, site managers can estimate a credible first iteration for the thresholds. It is possible to create a three-values threshold, to distinguish "poor", "fair" and "good" condition.

RESOURCES

- For additional details on "threshold" definition, refer to Part 3 Component 3 § 3.7 of the *IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas: Standard, Version 1.1.* (IUCN & WCPA, 2017).
- For examples of easy-to-apply MPA's values-related thresholds: *The MPA Guide: A framework to achieve global goals for the ocean.* (Grorud-Colvert et al., 2021)
- For defining and measuring performance thresholds for MPA key ecological attributes: Parrish et al. (2003).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Monitoring programme documentation
2. Discussion with site managers and consultation with relevant experts
3. Defined threshold values
4. Compliance with thresholds defined in EU directives (e.g., the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, OSPAR Convention, Barcelona Convention, etc.), when applicable, and other international frameworks as well as national regulations (such as the Coastal Law and Common Fisheries Policy).

Component 4: SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

Introduction

The fourth and final component of the Green List examines if the conservation goals and objectives for the site's natural, ecosystemic, and cultural values have been achieved.

The first three components lead to the fourth: high-quality governance, strong design and planning, and effective management are the key factors necessary for a marine protected area to achieve its conservation objectives.

Assessing conservation results against the thresholds identified in section 3.7.2 is the only way to demonstrate the preservation of the site's values.

As a candidate site for Green List certification, the following questions should be considered to meet the criteria of the fourth component:

- Is the site meeting the set thresholds (whether defined by national or international standards or self-imposed by the site's managers)? Is it exceeding them?
- Can the site demonstrate the conservation of its natural, ecosystemic, and cultural values?

CRITERIA 4.1 DEMONSTRATE CONSERVATION OF MAJOR NATURAL VALUES

Generic Indicator 4.1.1

The site meets or exceeds the performance thresholds for the conservation of major natural values, specified in Indicator 3.7.2, or meets the requirements specified in Indicator 4.1.2

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator focuses on the state of conservation of the MPA natural values.

"MPAs natural values" refer to the key natural elements that are important for conservation and that justified the protection of a marine area. These include:

- Biodiversity, such as protected habitat and species (as indicated in the Habitats Directive), populations of threatened or endangered species (IUCN Red List)
- Ecological processes, which support healthy and functioning ecosystems (e.g., nursery and spawning areas that sustain key life stages)
- Rare, unique, or representative ecosystems (e.g. *Posidonia oceanica* meadows or coralligenous habitats)
- Areas with high species richness or endemism, where many species or unique species are found

- Significant geomorphological features (e.g., caves or hydrothermal vents)
- Paleontological values, including fossil sites or other evidence of ancient life.

The achievement of each natural value threshold must be supported by reliable and verifiable data. Levels of achievement rated as fair or good are considered acceptable. (See guideline and Notes, indicator 3.7.1 for details on thresholds establishment)

In case of values in "poor condition" (below the lower threshold):

- There must be clear and well-justified reasoning, especially in cases where the EAGL determines that external conditions — meaning any circumstance beyond the control or mandate of the managing authority - have affected performance despite the extraordinary efforts of the management team. Such external conditions may include, for instance, exceptional environmental phenomena (e.g., mucilage blooms, mass mortality events caused by *Pinna nobilis* parasites, or other large-scale ecological disturbances), broader socio-political or climatic events (e.g., extreme storms, invasive species outbreaks, or political instability) that cannot be effectively prevented or mitigated at the site level (see indicator 4.1.2 for more details).
- The MPA manager must identify and document any ongoing or planned measures aimed at improving performance and working towards meeting the relevant thresholds in the near future through specific action plans.
- Normally, Green Listed sites should have all natural resources in good conditions. Exceptions may be granted for nature values in fair condition if there is a sound explanation of causes and a plan in place to restore the condition to good.
- In general, thresholds (identified on scientific evidence) should be adjusted to ensure they are realistic and needed. The thresholds should be used to guide adaptive management strategies.

RESOURCES

- Guidance on monitoring protected area goals and objectives is available in the *Protected Area Governance and Management Manual* (Worboys et al., 2015)

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. The achievement of each natural value threshold (or trends at relevant time scales depending on species/habitat/function involved) should be documented through the site's established monitoring programme (e.g. the MPA dashboard or annual reports and similar)
2. Periodic reports on management effectiveness evaluations of natural values

Top predators, such as dusky grouper are key species in rocky coastal ecosystems. © D. Fioramonti

Generic Indicator 4.1.2

The EAGL has recognised the external context in which the site operates as being especially challenging, and management is responding to prevent loss of the value

GUIDANCE & NOTES

The EAGL is the national or regional Expert Assessment Group for the Green List. This indicator only applies to MPAs characterized by a challenging natural and/or socio-economic context, making the achievement of conservation objectives more complex. This indicator can simply be answered by "not applicable" if that is not the case. Justification must be provided however if applicants consider the external context is, indeed, very challenging.

The EAGL will review the assessment results to evaluate the extent to which extreme external circumstances impact the natural values of the site, as well as how effectively the site is responding to prevent the loss of these values (See indicator 4.1.1 for more information and examples on Especially challenging contexts).

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Documentation (e.g. reports, local press, official expert judgement based on data) that justifies the challenging natural and/or socio-economic context of the MPA
2. The achievement of each natural value threshold should be documented through the site's established monitoring programme
3. If extreme external circumstances have impaired the condition of the natural value, evidence of efforts (for example: recommendations provided by experts, management plan update) to maintain the value despite the extreme circumstances should be provided

CRITERIA 4.2 DEMONSTRATE CONSERVATION OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Generic Indicator 4.2.1

The site meets or exceeds the performance measures for the conservation of ecosystem services, as specified in Indicator 3.7.1.

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator focuses on the state of conservation of the MPA ecosystem services.

"MPAs ecosystem services" are the benefits that humans can derive from marine ecosystems within MPAs. These include provisioning services (e.g. food, fuel, energy); regulating services (e.g. water quality, carbon storage; shoreline stabilization), supporting services (e.g. nutrient cycling), recreational and cultural services.

Conserving an ecosystem service requires the sustainable management of the ecosystems on which the service depends. The achievement of each ecosystem service threshold must be supported by reliable and verifiable data. Quantitative thresholds are highly recommended, however, as ecosystem services are particularly complex to assess, especially in marine environments, qualitative performance measures may be accepted by the EAGL when they are adequately justified, provided that the supporting rationale and documentation are deemed satisfactory by both the EAGL and Reviewers. Additionally, if it is not possible to define thresholds levels for all the ecosystem services, expert opinion or traditional knowledge may be employed to consider the condition of each ecosystem service as "poor", "fair" or "good".

RESOURCES

- For more information on tools to assess ecosystem services, refer to "Component 4 and Accompanying Guidance and Notes" of the Green List Standard (p. 39): *IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas: Standard, Version 1.1* (IUCN & WCPA, 2017)

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Periodical reports of management effectiveness evaluations of the achievement of each ecosystem service performance measures through the site's monitoring programme/dashboard/annual report

Generic Indicator 4.2.2

The provision of ecosystem services does not significantly impair the ecological values of the site

GUIDANCE & NOTES

MPAs are often established to enhance ecological values and the provision of ecosystem services (clean water, food production, climate regulation, recreation etc.). An MPA often must restrict or limit some human activities within an MPA, but the goal is to find a balance where benefits are derived without compromising the ecological value of the site. For example, the MPA might establish sustainable fishing practices that are more sustainable, or permit recreational activities such as kayaking or diving if they are managed to avoid disturbance/ significant impact to sensitive habitats and species. Applicants must prove that exploitation of ecosystem services does not harm the ecological values of the site.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Assessment against the monitoring data
2. Study and monitoring reports, as well as MPA dashboard or annual report, that support and justify the maintenance of practices and uses directly focused on ecosystem services.
3. Regulations for specific activities (e.g., disciplinary rules)
4. Documentation on experts' judgement (studied based) (e.g. reports, minutes, structured interviews)
1. Periodic reports on management effectiveness evaluations of the ecological values and ecosystem services

Fishing monitoring - Couronne reserve. © E Charbonnel/ PMCB

CRITERIA 4.3 DEMONSTRATE CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL VALUES

Generic Indicator 4.3.1

The site meets or exceeds the performance measures for the conservation of cultural values, as specified in Indicator 3.7.1

GUIDANCE & NOTES

This indicator focuses on the state of conservation of the MPA cultural values.

"MPAs cultural values" are tangible and non-tangible values that have aesthetic, bequest, spiritual, linguistic (local dialectology), toponymy (science of local names of shoreline), historical, recreational, scientific or social significance for past, present or future generations (e.g., biodiversity, minerals, patrimonial sites, cultural practices, collective memories, local ecological knowledge and "know how" that have a cultural meaning linked with the MPA).

The cultural values identified in Indicator 2.1.4, and their corresponding performance thresholds as defined in Indicator 3.7.2, should be considered. The achievement of each performance measure and corresponding threshold must be supported by reliable and verifiable data. Monitoring and assessment of cultural values may use both quantitative and qualitative methods, depending on what is most appropriate and meaningful for the specific cultural value being measured. Measurement systems should be developed in collaboration with local people and communities who hold these cultural values. Cultural value ratings (e.g., good, fair, or poor) should likely result from participatory group-based assessments involving those stakeholders, ensuring their knowledge, perspective, and priorities are fully integrated into the evaluation process.

RESOURCES

- For more information on how to measure the conservation of cultural values within Protected areas: *The Value of Nature: Ecological, Economic, Cultural and Social Benefits of Protected Areas.* (Mulongoy & Gidda, 2008)

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

1. Periodic reports (of the MPA or relevant authorities) on the achievement of each cultural value performance measure, documented through the site's established monitoring programme (as specified in indicator 2.1.4)
2. Site's monitoring plan that includes the maintenance and enhancement of identified cultural values
3. Periodic reports on management effectiveness evaluations of the cultural values

Some species have a high value for the public, such as this common dolphin. Cabo de Palos, Spain. © J. Postigo

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Annex **Connection between criteria**

This annex presents the relationships between Green List indicators in a text-based format, complementing the information provided in the Indicators links cross-walk (see Table). For each indicator, the relevant concepts under which connections exist are listed, followed by the corresponding related indicators. Concepts marked with a light blue dot indicate thematic relationships, while a dark blue dot denotes dependency relationships, where alignment with one indicator depends on another. This format is intended to support users in clearly identifying connections between indicators and to facilitate coherence and consistency when demonstrating alignment with the Green List Standard.

● Dependent indicators

GOOD GOUVERNANCE

1.1.1

The site's governance structure is clearly defined and documented and in accordance with relevant national or regional government, jurisdiction or recognised authority specifications.

GOVERNANCE ● STAKEHOLDERS PLANNING
1.1.2

GOVERNANCE ●
1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.2.1, 1.2.2

GOVERNANCE
1.2.3, 1.2.4, 2.1.2, 3.3.2

1.1.2

The site's local governance structures and mechanisms provide civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders with appropriate opportunities to participate in management planning, processes and actions.

STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 3.5.3

GOVERNANCE STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.6

STAKEHOLDERS USERS
1.2.4

STAKEHOLDERS ● PLANNING
1.3.1

STAKEHOLDERS ●
1.3.3

GOVERNANCE ● STAKEHOLDERS PLANNING
1.1.1

1.1.3

The site's local governance structures and mechanisms recognise the legitimate rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

GOVERNANCE STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.4, 1.1.6

GOVERNANCE ●
1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.3

GOVERNANCE
1.2.4

STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.2, 3.5.3

1.1.4

Rights-holders and stakeholders are effectively involved in decision-making and the adaptive management of the site.

GOVERNANCE
STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.3, 1.1.6

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

GOVERNANCE
1.2.2

STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.2

STAKEHOLDERS
1.3.3

1.1.5

Governance arrangements help advance gender equity in relation to management of the site.

EQUITY
3.1.5

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1

1.1.6

The defined governance structures and mechanisms are accepted by major constituents (civil society, rights-holders and stakeholders), reflecting the governance category of the site.

GOVERNANCE
1.2.1, 1.2.4

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1

GOVERNANCE
STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

1.2.1

The governance structures and key documents on management are readily accessible to civil society in an easily understandable format. Key documents include the site's management plan or equivalent, relevant subsidiary plans and other key direction documents.

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.2.2

GOVERNANCE
STAKEHOLDERS
1.2.3

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3, 2.3.1

STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.2, 3.5.3

GOVERNANCE
1.1.6

1.2.2

Where a formal decision-making body exists, the current membership of the body is publicly available and procedures for establishment and membership of the body are publicly accessible, or where there is no decision-making body appointed, the names and contact details of formal decision-makers such as a Minister or Agency Director are publicly accessible.

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.3

GOVERNANCE
1.1.4

1.2.3

The outcomes of discussions by decision-making bodies or decision-makers in relation to issues raised by civil society, rights-holders and stakeholders are publicly available.

STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.2, 1.2.4

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1

GOVERNANCE
STAKEHOLDERS
1.2.1

GOVERNANCE
1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.2.2

1.2.4

A readily accessible process to identify, hear and resolve complaints, disputes or grievances related to the governance or management of the site is in place.

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.1.6

GOVERNANCE
1.1.4

STAKEHOLDERS
USERS
1.1.2

STAKEHOLDERS
1.2.3

1.3.1

Procedures are in place to ensure that results from monitoring, evaluation and consultation are used to inform management and planning processes including the establishment of goals and objectives.

PLANNING
1.3.2

PLANNING
1.3.3, 2.3.1, 3.3.2

MONITORING
3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

STAKEHOLDERS
PLANNING
1.1.2

1.3.2

Planning and decision-making recognises relevant conditions, issues and goals at national and regional scales that impact the protected area.

PLANNING
1.3.3, 3.3.2

PLANNING
1.3.1

PLANNING
THREAT
2.3.1

THREAT
3.6.2

THREAT
3.6.4, 4.2.2

1.3.3

Planning and management processes draw on multiple knowledge sources (scientific, experiential, local and traditional knowledge).

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3

STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.2, 1.1.4

PLANNING
1.3.1, 1.3.2, 2.3.1, 3.3.2

1.3.4

The site has, where relevant, considered historical changes and future projections in social, ecological and climate conditions.

CLIMATE CHANGE
2.3.2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.1.1, 3.3.1, 3.3.2

SOUND DESIGN AND PLANNING

2.1.2

The site has been listed and correctly assigned one of the six IUCN Protected Area management categories, or has been listed as an 'Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure', and been assigned one of the four IUCN governance types in the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).

GOVERNANCE

1.1.1

2.1.3

The site has a current management plan or equivalent that is used to guide management priorities and activities.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.3.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.4.1

MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.2.1, 1.3.3, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.6.2

2.1.4

The major natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values of the site are clearly identified and understood.

MAJOR VALUES

2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

2.2.1

The designated site is large enough and sufficiently connected to other habitats or ecosystems to achieve the goals and objectives for the site's major values for nature conservation.

CONNECTIVITY

2.2.2

MAJOR VALUES

2.1.4

CONNECTIVITY
MAJOR VALUES

2.2.3

MAJOR VALUES

3.2.1, 3.2.2

2.2.2

The site is part of an identified conservation network which is designed to meet goals of representation, replication, connectivity and resilience.

CONNECTIVITY

2.2.1, 2.2.3

2.2.3

Where a major site value is 'ecological integrity': • The site contains an assemblage of native species and ecosystem types that is characteristic of the region, with intact ecological processes and trophic systems • The site is large enough and sufficiently well connected to sustain a viable species population and ecosystem processes in the long term • Where the species range is too large to be protected within one designated area: a) The site is designed to protect one or more critical life history stage for a species ...

MAJOR VALUES

3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.7.1, 4.1.1

MAJOR VALUES

2.1.4

CONNECTIVITY
MAJOR VALUES

2.2.1

CONNECTIVITY

2.2.2

2.3.1

Major current and potential threats to major natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values of the site are identified, understood and documented, and their location, extent and severity described in sufficient detail to enable effective planning and management to address them.

- THREAT ✓
- MAJOR VALUES ✓

2.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.6.4, 4.2.2

- MAJOR VALUES

3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.2

- MAJOR VALUES ✓

2.1.4, 3.3.2, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3

- PLANNING

1.3.1, 1.3.3, 3.5.1

- THREAT
- MAJOR VALUES ✓

4.1.2

- MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.2.1

- MANAGEMENT PLAN ✓

2.1.3

- PLANNING
- THREAT ✓

1.3.2

2.3.2

The likely impact of climate change on the major site values has been assessed, understood and documented.

- MAJOR VALUES ✓

2.1.4

- MAJOR VALUES

3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.2

- THREATS ✓
- MAJOR VALUES ✓

2.3.1, 3.4.1

- CLIMATE CHANGE

1.3.4

- THREAT
- MAJOR VALUES

4.1.2

- THREAT ✓
- MAJOR VALUES

2.3.1

2.4.1

The social and economic characteristics of the region that may be affected (positively or negatively) by the site's designation and/or current management have been identified and the location, extent and magnitude of effects of the site on social and economic characteristics have been described in the management plan or equivalent.

- SOCIO-ECONOMIC ✓
- MANAGEMENT PLAN ✓

2.4.2, 3.1.1, 3.3.1, 3.3.2

- SOCIO-ECONOMIC ✓

1.3.4

- MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1.3

- MANAGEMENT PLAN ✓

3.4.1

2.4.2

The social and economic benefits and effects have been considered in the development of management goals and objectives for the site in the management plan or equivalent.

- SOCIO-ECONOMIC ✓
- MANAGEMENT PLAN ✓

2.4.1, 3.1.1, 3.3.1, 3.3.2

- SOCIO-ECONOMIC ✓

1.3.4

- MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1.3

- MANAGEMENT PLAN ✓

3.4.1

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

3.1.1

The site has a current management plan or functional equivalent which includes: a) the goals and objectives for management of the natural values and social and/or economic objectives (where relevant) identified in Component 2; b) the management strategies and activities to achieve these goals over the long term and an indication of the activities that are allowed or prohibited in the site and any zoning or temporal/ spatial restrictions on access to or use of the site.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
1.3.4, 2.1.3

MAJOR VALUES
2.1.4, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3, 3.1.2, 3.4.1

MAJOR VALUES
2.3.1, 2.3.2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.3.1

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAJOR VALUES
3.3.2

USERS
3.5.3

USERS
MAJOR VALUES
3.6.1, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

MANAGEMENT PLAN
USERS
MAJOR VALUES
3.6.2

3.1.2

The site can demonstrate that management activities and policies, and/or legislation and regulations are being implemented and are consistent with the management plan (or equivalent).

MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAJOR VALUES
3.4.1

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3, 3.1.1

3.1.4

The site has adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff, led by an effective management team, to implement all aspects of its management plan in the long term.

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3

3.1.5

Management efforts support equity, including gender equity, related to site management.

EQUITY
1.1.5

3.1.6

Financial constraints are not threatening the capacity of management to achieve the site's objectives.

FINANCIAL
3.5.1

3.2.1

Strategies and actions to maintain ecological attributes and processes (including natural disturbances) to maintain or enhance the site's major values are identified and implemented.

MAJOR VALUES
2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.2.2

MAJOR VALUES
2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

3.2.2

The site can demonstrate that management activities related to natural values are being implemented and are sufficient for the maintenance of the site's major natural values and ecological processes.

MAJOR VALUES
2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

MAJOR VALUES
2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1

3.3.1

The social and economic context of the site has been incorporated into management, based on consideration of social and economic goals and objectives for the site, as established in Criterion 2.4.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
1.3.4, 3.3.2

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3, 3.4.1

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.1.1

3.3.2

Opportunities to enhance the social and economic benefit of the site to local communities (where consistent with conservation of major site values) are considered during reviews of management plan and through adaptive governance, management and planning processes.

GOVERNANCE
1.1.1

PLANNING
1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
1.3.4, 3.3.1

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3

MAJOR VALUES
2.1.4, 2.3.1

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.4.1, 2.4.2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAJOR VALUES
3.1.1

MAJOR VALUES
3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

3.4.1

The site management is implementing a work programme that identifies effective responses to each of the major threats to (a) major site values identified under Criterion 2.3 or (b) the achievement of the site's goals and objectives including long-term and 'external' threats.

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3, 2.4.2, 3.1.1, 3.3.1

MAJOR VALUES
2.1.4, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1

MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAJOR VALUES
3.1.2

MAJOR VALUES
3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

MAJOR VALUES
3.2.1, 3.2.2

THREAT
MAJOR VALUES
2.3.1, 2.3.2, 4.2.2

3.5.3

Laws and regulations regarding the use of the site are accessible to civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders.

STAKEHOLDERS
1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1

USERS
3.1.1

3.5.1

Patrol and surveillance systems, or equivalent, are in place where needed, are adequately set up with sufficient resources and effective operational procedures.

PLANNING
2.3.1

FINANCIAL
3.1.6

3.6.1

The types and levels of permitted activities are clearly described, and are compatible with the conservation of major site values.

USER
RIGHT HOLDER
MAJOR VALUES
3.6.2

MAJOR VALUES
2.1.4, 2.3.1, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

MAJOR VALUES
3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

USERS
MAJOR VALUES
3.1.1

3.6.2

Where use and access are permitted: • Uses and access are managed to minimise harm to the major site values, for example through permits, design, access control, or education; • The site's management strives to accommodate the needs of users, so far as this is compatible with the achievement of site objectives.

THREAT
1.3.2

MANAGEMENT PLAN
2.1.3

MANAGEMENT PLAN, USERS ✓ MAJOR VALUE ✓
3.1.1

USER, RIGHT HOLDER MAJOR VALUES ✓
3.6.1

MAJOR VALUES ✓
2.1.4, 2.3.1, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

MAJOR VALUES
3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.3.1

THREAT ✓ MAJOR VALUES
4.2.2

3.6.3

The nature and level of permitted access for visitors are clearly described and are compatible with the conservation of major site values and objectives.

USERS ✓ MAJOR VALUES ✓
3.1.1, 3.6.4

MAJOR VALUES ✓
2.1.4, 2.3.1, 3.6.1, 3.6.2

MAJOR VALUES
3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

3.6.4

Where visitor access is permitted: • Visitor impacts are managed to minimise harm to major site values, for example through permits, access control, the provision and siting of facilities, education and enforcement; • There is no evidence that the impacts of visitors are majorly threatening the achievement of the site's objectives; • Visitor services and facilities are appropriate to the character, values and use of the site; • Visitor services and facilities meet specified safety standards; • Visitor services and facilities meet reasonable standards of environmental sustainability; • Interpretive, educational and information services for visitors meet visitors' needs (e.g., the needs of different audiences or age groups); • The tourism industry within the site is managed to support the site's objectives; • Consideration has been given to the use of the site by disadvantaged people, and their needs have been adequately taken into account.

THREAT ✓
1.3.2

MAJOR VALUES ✓
2.1.4, 3.6.1, 3.6.2

THREAT ✓ MAJOR VALUES ✓
2.3.1

USERS ✓ MAJOR VALUES ✓
3.1.1, 3.6.3

MAJOR VALUES
3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

3.7.1

For each of the major site values identified under Criterion 2.1, a monitoring system is in place and a set of performance measures has been defined and documented, which provides an objective basis for determining whether the associated value is being successfully protected.

MAJOR VALUES
2.2.3, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

MAJOR VALUES ✓
2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.2.2, 3.4.1, 3.7.2

MONITORING ✓
1.3.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1

MONITORING
4.1.2, 4.2.2

3.7.2

A threshold level has been specified and assessed in relation to each set of performance measures that relate to natural values, that if achieved, is considered to demonstrate objectively that the associated major site value is being successfully conserved. As appropriate, threshold determination can include the assessment of conservation impact based on change in major values over a specified time period compared to those anticipated without the protected and conserved area.

MAJOR VALUES ✓
2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.2.2, 3.4.1, 3.7.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

MONITORING ✓
1.3.1

MAJOR VALUES
3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4

SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

4.1.1

The site meets or exceeds the performance thresholds for the conservation of major natural values, specified in Indicator 3.7.2, or meets the requirements specified in Indicator 4.1.2.

MAJOR VALUES

2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.2.2, 3.4.1, 3.7.2, 4.1.2

MAJOR VALUES

2.2.3, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

MONITORING

1.3.1, 3.7.1

4.1.2

The EAGL has recognised the external context in which the site operates as being especially challenging, and management is responding to prevent loss of the value.

MAJOR VALUES

2.1.4, 4.1.1

THREAT MAJOR VALUES

2.3.1

THREAT MAJOR VALUES

2.3.2

MONITORING

3.7.1

MAJOR VALUES

3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1

4.2.1

The site meets or exceeds the performance measures for the conservation of ecosystem services, as specified in Indicator 3.7.1.

THREATS MAJOR VALUES

4.2.2

MAJOR VALUES

3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.3.1,

MONITORING

1.3.1, 3.7.1

MAJOR VALUES

2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.4.1, 3.7.2

4.2.2

The provision of ecosystem services does not significantly impair the ecological values of the site.

MONITORING

1.3.1

THREAT

1.3.2

MAJOR VALUES

2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.7.2

THREAT MAJOR VALUES

2.3.1, 3.4.1, 4.2.1

MAJOR VALUES

3.6.1, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 4.1.1, 4.1.2

THREAT MAJOR VALUES

3.6.2

MONITORING

3.7.1

4.3.1

The site meets or exceeds the performance measures for the conservation of cultural values, as specified in Indicator 3.7.1.

MONITORING

1.3.1, 3.7.1

MAJOR VALUES

2.1.4, 3.1.1, 3.4.1, 3.7.2

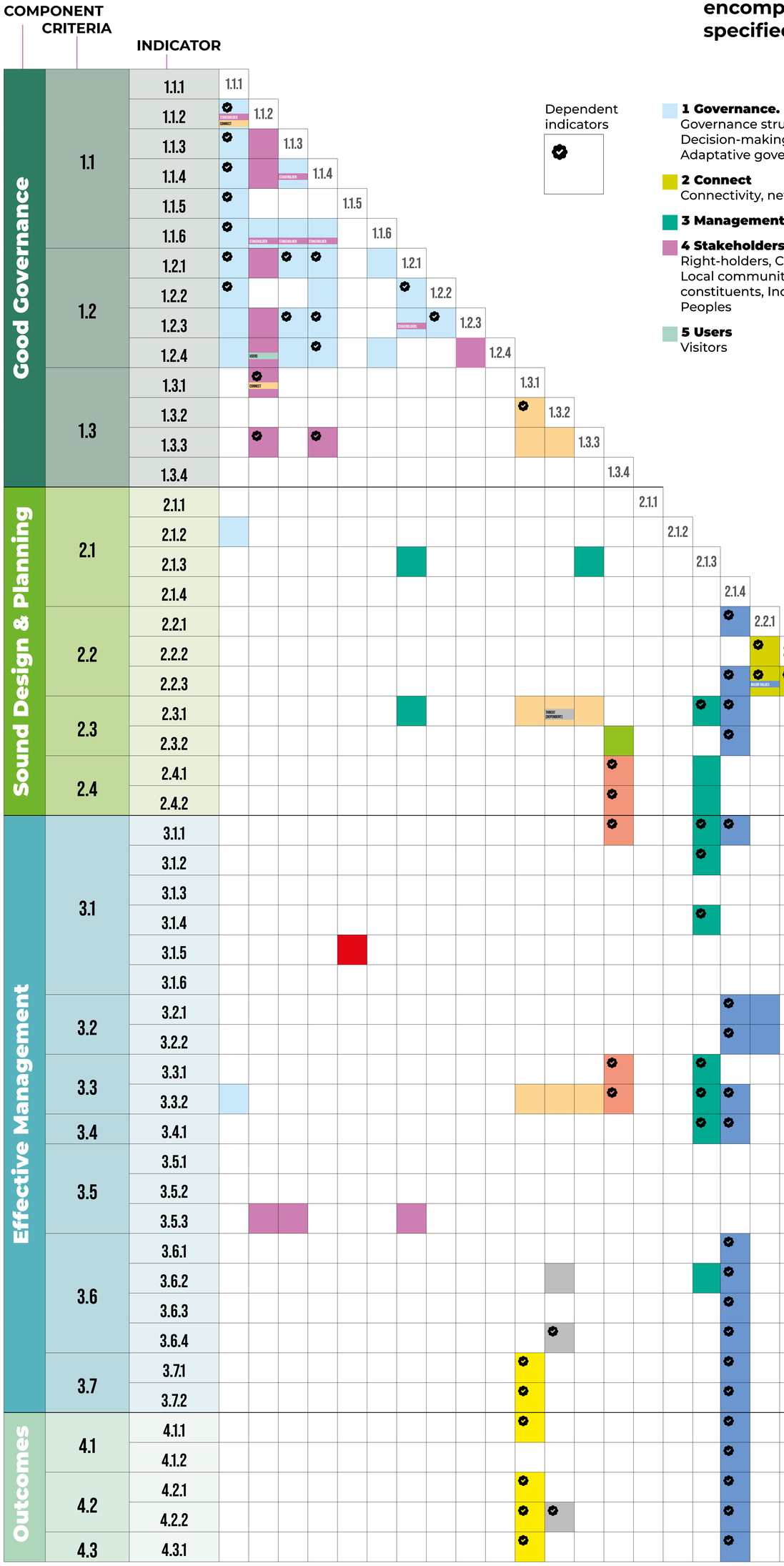
MAJOR VALUES

3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1

Indicators links cross-walk

This figure presents a matrix of Green List indicators, where each cell highlights relationships between pairs of indicators. Coloured cells indicate thematic linkages, with each colour representing a specific concept, as detailed in the legend. In cases where indicators are connected across multiple concepts, combined colours are shown within the same cell. Each concept may encompass one or more related sub-themes, also specified in the legend.

A ✔ is used to denote a dependency relationship, indicating that the alignment with one indicator is dependent on the presence or fulfillment of another. The full text of the indicators is provided alongside the matrix. This cross-walk is designed to support users in identifying connections between indicators, thereby facilitating coherence and consistency when demonstrating alignment with the Green List Standard.



Dependent indicators

- **1 Governance.** Governance structure, Decision-making body, Adaptative governance
- **2 Connect** Connectivity, network
- **3 Management plan**
- **4 Stakeholders** Right-holders, CSO, Local communities, constituents, Indigenous Peoples
- **5 Users** Visitors
- **6 Socio-Economic** Social
- **7 Major Values** Site values, Natural values, Ecosistemic values, Cultural values
- **8 Threat** Impact, Impair, Loss of value
- **9 Climate change**
- **10 Financial** Resources. [Economic]
- **11 Monitoring** Thresholds, Performance levels, Performance thresholds
- **12 Planning**

GOOD GOVERNANCE

1.1.1 The site's governance structure is clearly defined and documented and in accordance with relevant national or regional government, jurisdiction or recognised authority specifications.

1.1.2 The site's local governance structures and mechanisms provide civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders with appropriate opportunities to participate in management planning, processes and actions.

1.1.3 The site's local governance structures and mechanisms recognise the legitimate rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

1.1.4 Rights-holders and stakeholders are effectively involved in decision-making and the adaptive management of the site.

1.1.5 Governance arrangements help advance gender equity in relation to management of the site.

1.1.6 The defined governance structures and mechanisms are accepted by major constituents (civil society, rights-holders and stakeholders), reflecting the governance category of the site.

1.2.1 The governance structures and key documents on management are readily accessible to civil society in an easily understandable format. Key documents include the site's management plan or equivalent, relevant subsidiary plans and other key direction documents.

1.2.2 Where a formal decision-making body exists, the current membership of the body is publicly available and procedures for establishment and membership of the body are publicly accessible, or where there is no decision-making body appointed, the names and contact details of formal decision-makers such as a Minister or Agency Director are publicly accessible.

1.2.3 The outcomes of discussions by decision-making bodies or decision-makers in relation to issues raised by civil society, rights-holders and stakeholders are publicly available.

1.2.4 A readily accessible process to identify, hear and resolve complaints, disputes or grievances related to the governance or management of the site is in place.

1.3.1 Procedures are in place to ensure that results from monitoring, evaluation and consultation are used to inform management and planning processes including the establishment of goals and objectives.

1.3.2 Planning and decision-making recognises relevant conditions, issues and goals at national and regional scales that impact the protected area.

1.3.3 Planning and management processes draw on multiple knowledge sources (scientific, experiential, local and traditional knowledge).

1.3.4 The site has, where relevant, considered historical changes and future projections in social, ecological and climate conditions.

SOUND DESIGN &PLANNING

2.1.1 The site meets the IUCN definition of a Protected Area and/or is recognised as a 'Conserved Area'.

2.1.2 The site has been listed and correctly assigned one of the six IUCN Protected Area management categories, or has been listed as an 'Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure', and been assigned one of the four IUCN governance types in the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).

2.1.3 The site has a current management plan or equivalent that is used to guide management priorities and activities.

2.1.4 The major natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values of the site are clearly identified and understood.

2.2.1 The designated site is large enough and sufficiently connected to other habitats or ecosystems to achieve the goals and objectives for the site's major values for nature conservation.

2.2.2 The site is part of an identified conservation network which is designed to meet goals of representation, replication, connectivity and resilience.

2.2.3 Where a major site value is 'ecological integrity': • The site contains an assemblage of native species and ecosystem types that is characteristic of the region, with intact ecological processes and trophic systems • The site is large enough and sufficiently well connected to sustain a viable species population and ecosystem processes in the long term • Where the species range is too large to be protected within one designated area: a) The site is designed to protect one or more critical life history stage for a species ...

2.3.1 Major current and potential threats to major natural values and associated ecosystem services and cultural values of the site are identified, understood and documented, and their location, extent and severity described in sufficient detail to enable effective planning and management to address them.

2.3.2 The likely impact of climate change on the major site values has been assessed, understood and documented.

2.4.1 The social and economic characteristics of the region that may be affected (positively or negatively) by the site's designation and/or current management have been identified and the location, extent and magnitude of effects of the site on social and economic characteristics have been described in the management plan or equivalent.

2.4.2 The social and economic benefits and effects have been considered in the development of management goals and objectives for the site in the management plan or equivalent.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

3.1.1 The site has a current management plan or functional equivalent which includes: a) the goals and objectives for management of the natural values and social and/or economic objectives (where relevant) identified in Component 2; b) the management strategies and activities to achieve these goals over the long term and an indication of the activities that are allowed or prohibited in the site and any zoning or temporal/spatial restrictions on access to or use of the site.

3.1.2 The site can demonstrate that management activities and policies, and/or legislation and regulations are being implemented and are consistent with the management plan (or equivalent).

3.1.3 Adequate, functional and safe equipment and infrastructure is available and accessible to staff as appropriate to manage the site.

3.1.4 The site has adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff, led by an effective management team, to implement all aspects of its management plan in the long term.

3.1.5 Management efforts support equity, including gender equity, related to site management.

3.1.6 Financial constraints are not threatening the capacity of management to achieve the site's objectives.

3.2.1 Strategies and actions to maintain ecological attributes and processes (including natural disturbances) to maintain or enhance the site's major values are identified and implemented.

3.2.2 The site can demonstrate that management activities related to natural values are being implemented and are sufficient for the maintenance of the site's major natural values and ecological processes.

3.3.1 The social and economic context of the site has been incorporated into management, based on consideration of social and economic goals and objectives for the site, as established in Criterion 2.4.

3.3.2 Opportunities to enhance the social and economic benefit of the site to local communities (where consistent with conservation of major site values) are considered during reviews of management plan and through adaptive governance, management and planning processes.

3.4.1 The site management is implementing a work programme that identifies effective responses to each of the major threats to (a) major site values identified under Criterion 2.3 or (b) the achievement of the site's goals and objectives including long-term and 'external' threats.

3.5.1 Patrol and surveillance systems, or equivalent, are in place where needed, are adequately set up with sufficient resources and effective operational procedures.

3.5.2 Legal or customary compliance mechanisms are supported including the equitable application of appropriate sanctions to offenders.

3.5.3 Laws and regulations regarding the use of the site are accessible to civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders.

3.6.1 The types and levels of permitted activities are clearly described, and are compatible with the conservation of major site values.

3.6.2 Where use and access are permitted: • Uses and access are managed to minimise harm to the major site values, for example through permits, design, access control, or education; • The site's management strives to accommodate the needs of users, so far as this is compatible with the achievement of site objectives.

3.6.3 The nature and level of permitted access for visitors are clearly described and are compatible with the conservation of major site values and objectives.

3.6.4 Where visitor access is permitted: • Visitor impacts are managed to minimise harm to major site values, for example through permits, access control, the provision and siting of facilities, education and enforcement; • There is no evidence that the impacts of visitors are majorly threatening the achievement of the site's objectives; • Visitor services and facilities are appropriate to the character, values and use of the site; • Visitor services and facilities meet specified safety standards; • Visitor services and facilities meet reasonable standards of environmental sustainability; • Interpretive, educational and information services for visitors meet visitors' needs (e.g., the needs of different audiences or age groups); • The tourism industry within the site is managed to support the site's objectives; • Consideration has been given to the use of the site by disadvantaged people, and their needs have been adequately taken into account.

3.7.1 For each of the major site values identified under Criterion 2.1, a monitoring system is in place and a set of performance measures has been defined and documented, which provides an objective basis for determining whether the associated value is being successfully protected.

3.7.2 A threshold level has been specified and assessed in relation to each set of performance measures that relate to natural values, that if achieved, is considered to demonstrate objectively that the associated major site value is being successfully conserved. As appropriate, threshold determination can include the assessment of conservation impact based on change in major values over a specified time period compared to those anticipated without the protected and conserved area.

SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

4.1.1 The site meets or exceeds the performance thresholds for the conservation of major natural values, specified in Indicator 3.7.2, or meets the requirements specified in Indicator 4.1.2.

4.1.2 The EAGL has recognised the external context in which the site operates as being especially challenging, and management is responding to prevent loss of the value.

4.2.1 The site meets or exceeds the performance measures for the conservation of ecosystem services, as specified in Indicator 3.7.1.

4.2.2 The provision of ecosystem services does not significantly impair the ecological values of the site.

4.3.1 The site meets or exceeds the performance measures for the conservation of cultural values, as specified in Indicator 3.7.1.

ADAPTING THE IUCN GREEN LIST STANDARD V1.1 TO MEDITERRANEAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

DELIVERABLE 1.6
MEDITERRANEAN MPAS-TAILORED IUCN GREEN LIST SET OF GUIDANCE AND NOTES

GreenList4MMPAs

Interreg Euro-MED

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