



**Conservation of priority species  
of marine megafauna in Greece and Italy**

LIFE22-NAT-EL-101113792- LIFE MareNatura



Co-funded by  
the European Union





# LIFE MareNatura on enlarging the Greek MPA network to adequately protect marine megafauna

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“Effective management of EU marine protected areas”



# «LIFE MareNatura: Conservation of priority species of marine megafauna in Greece and Italy»

## PROJECT LOCATION:

Greek territorial waters and Greek EEZ

## BUDGET INFO:

Total amount: 10 707 187.54 €

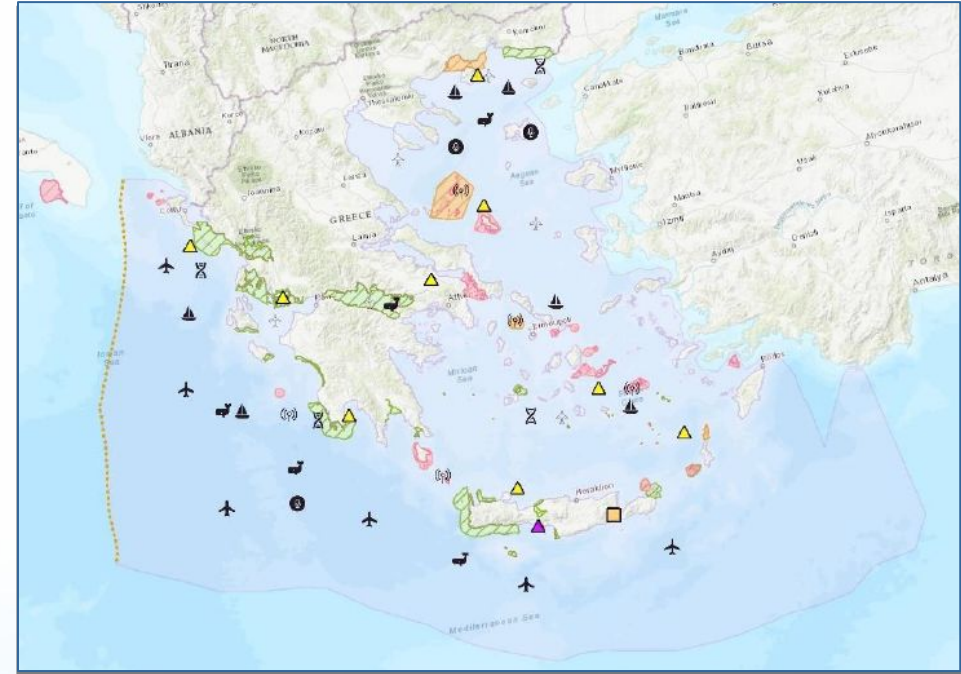
% EC Co-funding: 75%

## DURATION:

Start: 01/07/2023 - End: 30/06/2029 (6 years)

## Coordinating Beneficiary:

Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR)

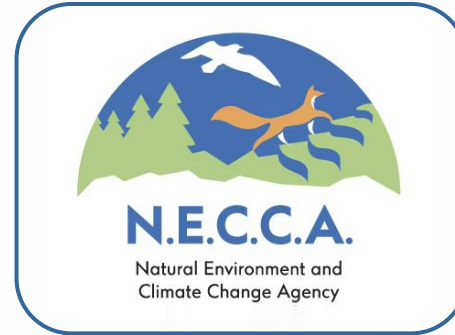


# The LIFE MareNatura consortium

## 5 institutes & universities



## 1 government agency



## 2 consulting companies



## 4 NGOs





# The target species

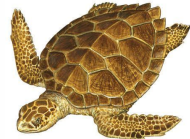
The project area holds significant percentages of the EU populations of the target species:

>86%



*Caretta caretta*  
**Loggerhead turtle**

the only developmental habitat



*Chelonia mydas*  
**Green turtle**

95%



*Monachus monachus*  
**Mediterranean monk seal**

35% breeding &  
>85% of foraging habitats



*Puffinus yelkouan*  
**Yelkouan shearwater**

>4%



*Larus audouinii*  
**Audouin's gull**



95% of MED  
*Physeter macrocephalus*  
**Sperm whale**

3%



*Delphinus delphis*  
**Common dolphin**

100% of MED



*Phocoena phocoena*  
**Harbour porpoise**

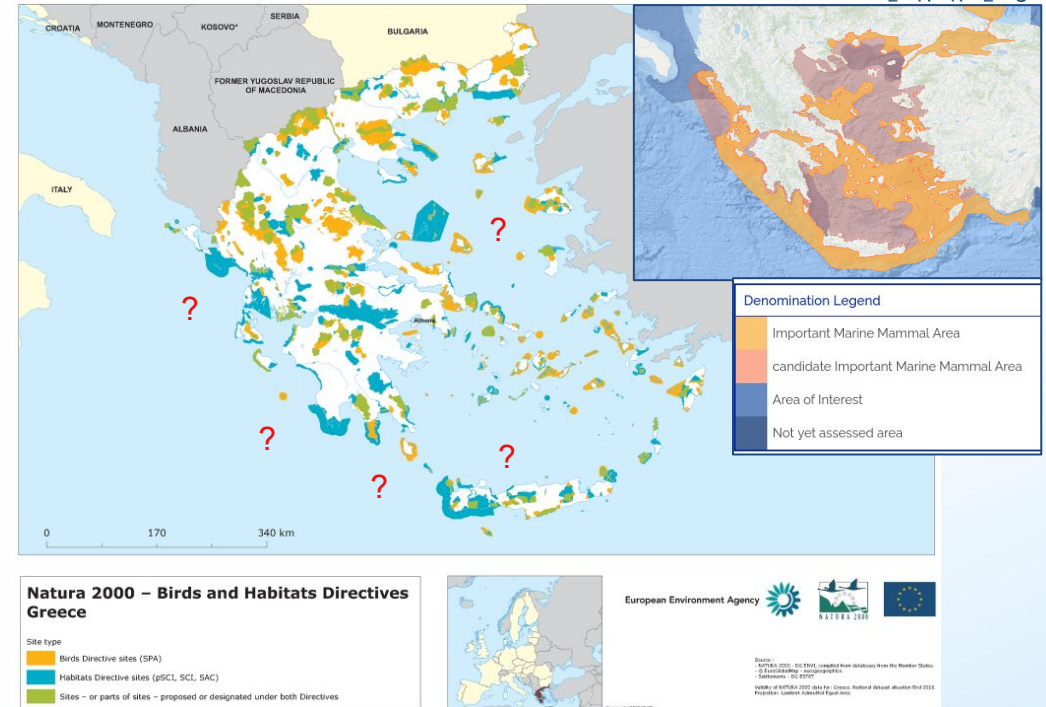
?



*Ziphius cavirostris*  
**Cuvier's beaked whale**

# Why a LIFE MareNatura project?

- Greek marine Natura 2000 sites cover mostly coastal areas and breeding coastal sites of priority species.
- **Offshore areas**, which are feeding/migratory grounds for priority marine megafauna **understudied / not under protection**
- Lack of a coherent management system of protected areas - “paper parks”
- No national Marine Spatial Plans
- Inadequate capacity of the competent authorities

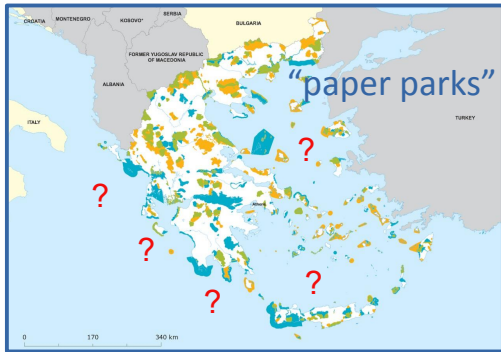


- 22,746 km<sup>2</sup> or **18.3%** of territorial waters of Greece under protection (considering 6 n.m. in the Aegean and 12 n.m. in the Ionian).
- Much less if we consider the offshore areas within the EEZ



# Increasing threats and new uses of the marine environment

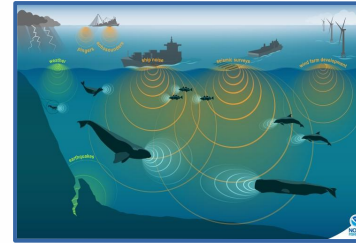
Insufficient coverage of N2K due to lack of ecological knowledge



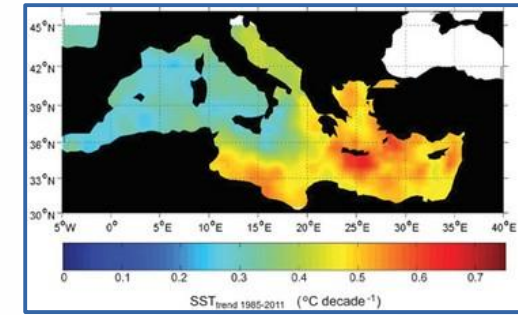
Marine Traffic



Underwater noise



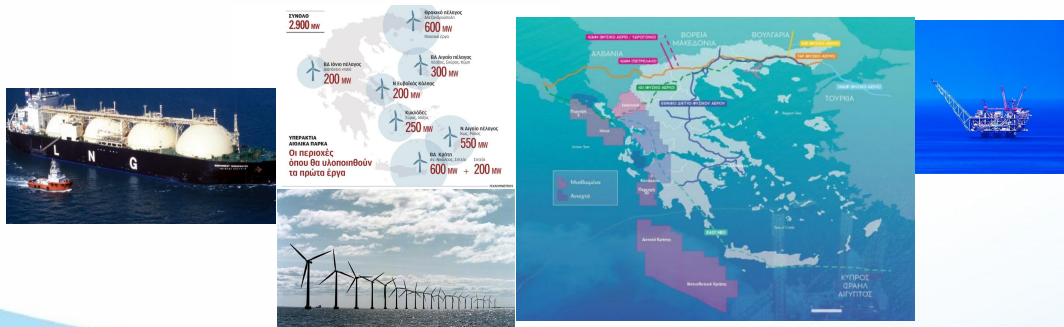
Climate change



Strandings



Energy production



Tourism and recreation



Fisheries (by-catch, overfishing)



# LIFE MareNatura Objectives

## Efficient protection for 9 priority species of marine megafauna through:

- identification, delineation and proposal for designation of **new offshore Natura 2000 sites** in the Greek territorial waters and the Greek EEZ
- **systematic conservation planning** in the Aegean, Ionian and South Adriatic Seas
- establishment of a **modern and cost-effective monitoring scheme** for the regular assessment of the conservation status of the priority species

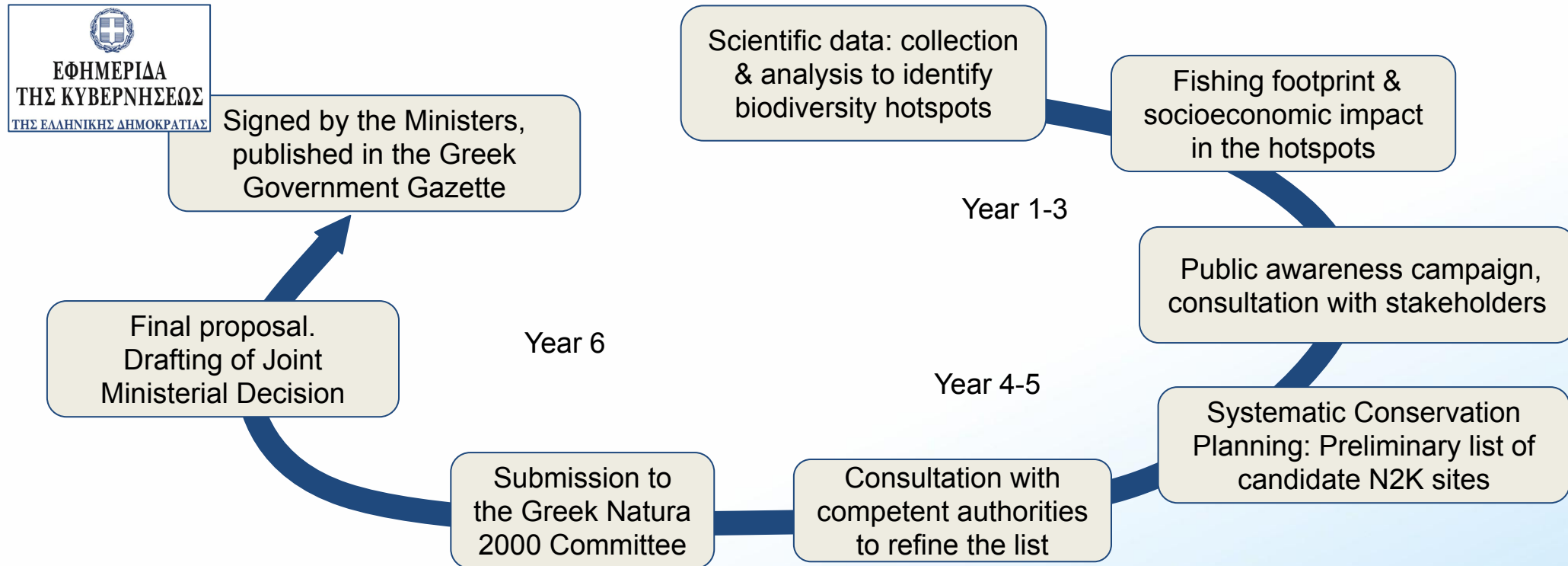


# LIFE MareNatura Objectives, achieved by:

- **extensive field surveys to identify biodiversity hotspots** with state-of-the-art methodologies
- **map threats/economic activities** (fisheries, tourism, energy production, marine traffic)
- Identify candidate marine N2K (including areas of absolute protection) through **systematic conservation planning**
- **capacity building**
  - develop a transparent and flexible Decision Support Tool for systematic conservation and spatial planning in the marine environment
  - establish a Marine Conservation School to train managers, decision makers and stakeholders
  - establish a Marine Conservation Task Force Team by the competent authority
- **networking with experts and stakeholders**



# Propose new marine Natura 2000 sites



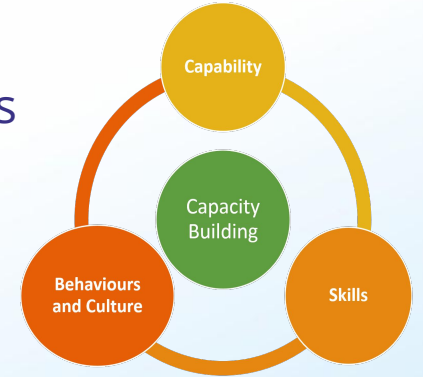
# Management Plans

- **Site-Specific Conservation Objectives and Management Guidelines** for the N2K sites and identified hotspots
  - updated for all current N2K sites included in the project (41)
  - new for the identified hotspots and the proposed N2K sites
  
- Species-specific **risks maps** for the 9 target species for the project area



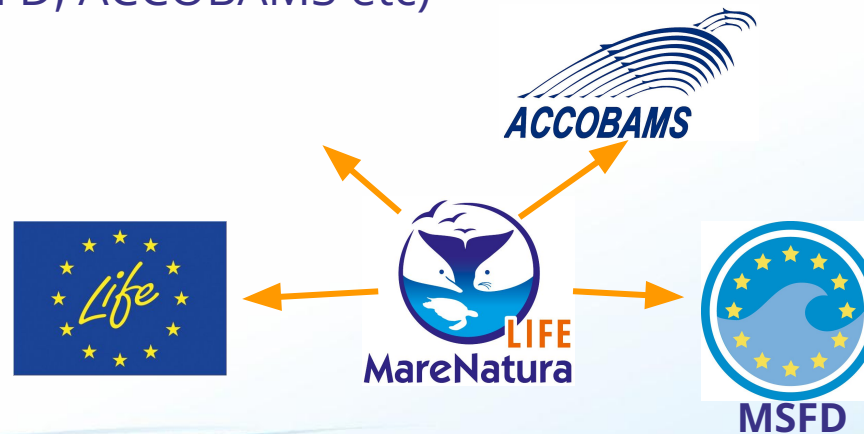
# Capacity building

- Improve the decision-making process in Maritime Spatial Planning
- Establish an efficient and state-of-the-art **early warning/monitoring scheme**
- Develop an **Integrated Monitoring Project** to regularly assess the species conservation status
- Increase the capacity of the competent authorities and site managers
  - Marine Conservation School - Marine Conservation Task Force
  - Pilot conservation actions, training seminars



# Networking

- **MARBIONET:** Establishment of an EU Mediterranean network of marine biodiversity academics and NGOs
- Collaboration with national, regional and international bodies and actors - Creation of a policy implementation roadmap
- Interaction with other projects with similar scope (other LIFE projects, MSFD, ACCOBAMS etc)



## Expected impact (during the project, **after**)

Survey 480K km<sup>2</sup> of  
marine areas



>30 (+5) new Marine  
Biodiversity Hotspots of 30K km<sup>2</sup>



>20 new marine  
Natura 2000 sites

150 (+25) Site-Specific Conservation Objectives  
for the identified hotspots

200 management  
guidelines

Species-specific risk maps  
for the 9 target species

>100 site managers and decision  
makers trained (+50)



# LIFE MareNatura overall impact

- **Support Greece to achieve the target “30 by 30” for marine areas**
  - commitment by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy
  - expected pledges in the 9th Our Ocean Conference
  
- Contribute to Marine Spatial Planning by providing valuable data to the competent authorities



Thank you for your attention

2nd EU Blue Parks Community Workshop, 7 March 2024, Brussels



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