



# Guide to Good Capacity-Building Practices in the Life A-MAR Project

March 2026

LIFE20 GIE/IT/001352

**LIFE A-MAR NATURA2000**

*Knowing and loving the Natura 2000 marine sites to protect them*



## Authors

Fundación Biodiversidad del Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico.



### Developed within the framework of the LIFE A-MAR NATURA2000 Project

The LIFE A-MAR NATURA2000 project aims to increase knowledge and awareness of the Natura 2000 sites through more sustainable management of human activities and the involvement of the main stakeholders who use the ecosystem services of these sites. The project will carry out communication and information actions that will mainly concern the Natura 2000 marine sites in the Mediterranean, Italy and Spain and will see the participation of all sea users.

Coordinating Beneficiary: Federparchi - Federazione Italiana Parchi e Riserve Naturali - Europarc Italia. Partners: Triton Research, Fundación Biodiversidad del Ministerio dell'Ambiente per la Transizione Ecologica e la Sfida Demografica and Lipu. Co-financers: National Park of Asinara, Arcipelago Toscano, Cinque Terre.

LIFE A-MAR NATURA2000 is supported by the LIFE Programme of the European Union.





General information				
Work Package	A1 Preparatory Actions  B.3 Capacitación y desarrollo de capacidades para los organismos de gestión de sitios marinos N2000 y las partes interesadas			
Deliverable	B.3.2 Capacity Building Good Practices Guide			
Due Data	30.03.2026			
Submission Date	30.03.2026			
Deliverable Lead	Fundación Biodiversidad			
Dissemination Level	X	Public (PU)		Confidential (CO)
Document Nature	X	Report (R)		Other (O)
Description of the related task and the deliverable	<p><b>Description and methods employed (what, how, where, when and why):</b></p> <p>The objective of the action is to organise training activities and courses for staff from the managing bodies of Natura 2000 sites, technicians involved in environmental education (e.g. associations and nature guides), and stakeholders (socio-economic sectors and other users), in order to promote appropriate teaching techniques and raise community awareness of the topics presented so far and the N2000 sites.</p> <p>This action is based on the conviction that having well-trained managers and users in marine protected areas is essential for their proper functioning and conservation status. Increasing knowledge through training programmes, systematic and organised procedures to acquire professionalism and skills will enhance both the individual capacity of each manager or local operator and, collectively, that of the managing body. Training is envisaged for the technical staff of N2000 site managers and local operators (educators, environmental guides, tour leaders) who will take part in subsequent public information actions and other stakeholder engagement activities (fishermen and tourists).</p> <p>The Spanish Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) highlights the need to strengthen the capacities of managers and users of marine Natura 2000 sites to ensure their proper conservation and protection. On this basis, the Capacity Building Strategy developed under LIFE IP INTEMARES identified 335 barriers and 246 needs, and established the roadmap to generate options to overcome the barriers and difficulties encountered and meet the identified needs, with the aim of achieving a coherent and efficient marine Natura 2000 network. In this context, training courses will be developed in</p>			



coordination with the Capacity Building Strategy of the LIFE INTEMARES project.

FB will deliver at least 3 training sessions per year in Spain (12 in total) on the following topics:

- Efficient management of the marine Natura 2000 network;
- Mixed / cross-cutting skills in the marine Natura 2000 network;
- Mediation and conflict resolution for environmental, economic and social sustainability in the marine Natura 2000 network;
- Communication in the marine Natura 2000 network;
- Guides / interpreters of the marine Natura 2000 network.

In Spain, at least 250 people are expected to be trained during the 12 training sessions, targeting the following audiences: managers of marine Natura 2000 sites, environmental educators/nature guides, the professional and recreational fishing sector, tourism operators, and recreational boating operators. The training will address issues related to effective management, mixed and cross-cutting skills, mediation and conflict resolution, and marine Natura 2000 communication.

The results of these training sessions, together with FB's previous experience in organising training courses, are expected to be transferred to Italian partners and other Mediterranean countries during an exchange workshop.

Federparchi, proposing the same topics and using similar materials, will organise at least 3 training sessions per year in Italy (12 in total) on communication in the marine Natura 2000 network, using materials and content produced by FB for Spain. It is expected that at least a further 250 people will be trained during these 12 training sessions. Many associations, federations, etc. have already contributed to participation in this action, such as the environmental NGO Marevivo ONLUS, which is committed to transferring the project's know-how to its members.

The identified technical staff and environmental operators of Italian marine N2000 sites will be key actors, as the main promoters of N2000 site policies and strategies towards all other stakeholders. The identified target groups (at least 250 people from Italian marine N2000 sites) will receive appropriate training on conservation measures for marine N2000 sites and their potential for related activities (general concepts, impacts, case studies, management measures, regulations, valorisation activities, etc.); on common communication issues with the general public (conflicts with local populations, fishermen, other stakeholders); and on the active role of citizens in raising awareness of the objectives of a marine N2000 site (adoption of good practices, responsible purchasing of local species, etc.).



	<p>Federparchi will also ensure the translation into Italian of all documentation produced by the Spanish partner.</p> <p>As a final output, a <b>Guide to Good Capacity-Building Practices</b> will be published, showing how the training sessions organised have addressed the identified needs.</p>			
Authors	Fundación Biodiversidad			
Reviewers				
Status		Draft	x	Final



## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	7
2. Context and Regulatory Framework.....	8
2.1. The Marine Natura 2000 Network: Background and Objectives.....	8
2.2. International and National Legislation and Regulation .....	10
2.3. Governance and Participation in the Management of the Marine Natura 2000 Network.....	10
2.4. Challenges in Implementation and Regulatory Compliance .....	11
3. Importance of training in the Marine Natura 2000 network .....	11
4. Training Strategy: Roadmap for Capacity Building .....	12
5. LIFE A-MAR Training Plan .....	14
6. Lessons learned and challenges in implementing the training plan .....	18
6.1 Evaluation of the implementation of the training plan for the marine Natura 2000 network .....	18
6.2 Key lessons learned .....	21
7. Best practices and recommendations in training .....	22
8. Examples of other training programmes.....	35
8.1. LIFE ENABLE Programme .....	35
8.2. MedPAN.....	35
8.3. EUROPARC-España.....	36
8.4. LIFE FOREST NETWORK .....	36
8.5. School of Protected Areas .....	36
9. Resources, tools and guides for training .....	37
9.1. Resources and tools.....	37
9.2. Useful guides for implementing recommendations .....	39
10. Conclusions .....	40
11. Bibliography .....	41
12. Annexes.....	42
Annex I- Annex I – Training Strategy Action Plan Programmes .....	42
Annex II. SWOT Analysis Tables.....	43



# 1. Introduction

Thirty years after its creation, the Natura 2000 network is the largest network of protected natural areas in the world, covering around 20% of the territory of the European Union. However, as shown by [Eurobarometer](#) surveys (European Commission, 2019), it is still little known. According to these surveys, in Spain, only 6% of Spaniards have heard of the Natura 2000 network and know what it is, compared to 9% in Italy. This lack of awareness is also present in broad sectors of society, among which there is great confusion regarding its meaning. In fact, there is still a lack of understanding that this network of protected areas allows the use of resources as long as it is done in a sustainable manner, ensuring that humans and nature live in harmony.

One of the reasons for this lack of awareness is the difficulty in accessing information on the Natura 2000 network, as well as the limited and poor dissemination of such information (CEE web for Biodiversity; 2019). This means that users who frequent these protected areas, whether for leisure or work, have little awareness of their conservation and are unaware of which activities or practices are permitted, and which are not, leading to many of these actions posing a threat to ecosystems.

The Natura 2000 network has high ecological and social value, as its mission is to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's species and habitats. It thus contributes to halting biodiversity loss while allowing the conservation of natural values to be reconciled with the development of economic activities. However, achieving these objectives **depends largely on the support of those directly involved in managing these spaces, as well as the various economic sectors and different users**, in addition to the general public. However, a lack of awareness of the Natura 2000 network, particularly in relation to marine areas, hinders the involvement of different groups in the conservation of these protected areas.

In this context, the [LIFE A-MAR NATURA 2000](#) project was launched in 2021 with the aim of **promoting awareness of the marine areas of the Natura 2000 network**, transforming them into well-known places of public interest, whose uses and activities are compatible with their conservation. Its main objective is to disseminate and promote best practices for the use and conservation of marine areas within the Natura 2000 network, through more sustainable management of human activities and the involvement of key stakeholders who benefit from the ecosystem services provided by these areas. Specifically, the project pursues the following [five objectives](#):

1. Raise awareness of the **existence, location and importance** of Natura 2000 marine sites among specific categories of sea users.
2. **Promote good practices**, which can also be transferred, and environmentally sustainable behaviours in the **management of marine areas within the Natura 2000 network**.
3. Promote **active citizenship in knowledge and education**.
4. **Provide training to managers and users of marine areas within the Natura 2000 network** to enable more accurate and effective communication about the presence, environmental values and benefits of these areas.
5. **Broaden knowledge on the marine areas of the Natura 2000 Network among the sectors involved and other users who frequent them**, and to increase their efforts to conserve these areas through the knowledge and monitoring actions planned within the framework of citizen science initiatives.



In order to meet the objective of improving the capabilities of managers and those sectors that carry out activities in these areas, action "**B.3: Training and capacity building for management bodies and sectors involved in the marine areas of the Natura 2000 network**" was designed. The aim of this action is to organise activities and training courses for the staff of management bodies and users of these areas in order to improve their skills **regarding the marine Natura 2000 network**. Initially, 24 training sessions were planned (12 in Italy and 12 in Spain), in addition to a workshop for sharing experiences. As a result of this training plan, a guide to good practices in training on the Natura 2000 Network was developed, which constitutes this deliverable.

This training plan on Natura 2000 marine areas is based on the [Capacity Building Strategy](#) developed within the framework of the [LIFE IP INTEMARES](#) project. This strategy provides a clear roadmap with a set of training processes through which the different managers and entities linked to sectors such as tourism, fishing, diving, nautical-recreational, NGOs, port authorities, among others, among others, acquire knowledge and skills on the responsible use and management of ecosystems, increasing their capacity to contribute to the fulfilment of the objectives established for the protection of marine areas.

This deliverable "**B.3.2: The "Good Practice Guide for Capacity Building"**" compiles the best practices, advice and recommendations that have emerged from the implementation of the training plan on the marine Natura 2000 network, as well as other actions promoted by the LIFE IP INTEMARES project. This document provides a reference framework for organisations wishing to implement training activities related to the conservation of marine protected areas, as well as a reflection on the challenges and difficulties encountered, for which some solutions are provided in the conclusions section.

## Structure of the guide

This guide is organised as a progressive journey that begins by presenting the **context and regulatory framework** of the marine Natura 2000 network, as well as the **importance of strengthening the capacities** of managers and users. The following describes the **Capacity Building Strategy** of the LIFE IP INTEMARES project and its role as a roadmap for the **training plan developed by LIFE A-MAR**, the results of which are included in the document. Subsequently, the **lessons learned and the SWOT analysis** derived from the implementation of the training programme are presented, which serve as the basis for the following section, where **good practices and recommendations** for future training processes are systematised. The guide is rounded off with **examples of other relevant training programmes**, a compilation of **useful resources, tools and guides**, and a final section of **conclusions** that summarises the key guidelines for moving towards more effective, inclusive and sustainable training. Finally, the **bibliography consulted** and a series of **appendices** with supplementary materials are included.

## 2. Context and Regulatory Framework

### 2.1. The Marine Natura 2000 Network: Background and Objectives

The **Natura 2000 network** is the largest network of protected areas in the world, and its mission is to ensure the long-term conservation of species and habitats in Europe, help halt the loss of biodiversity, and reconcile



the conservation of natural values with the development of economic activities. Its implementation at sea is key to protecting fragile ecosystems and promoting the sustainable use of marine resources.

This network stems from the implementation of an ambitious policy framework by the EU to address multiple environmental challenges. Specifically, for the protection of marine areas, the regulations governing these areas are based on the Habitats and Birds Directives, applying protection measures such as Sites of Community Importance (SCI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs), as well as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

The **regulatory framework of the Natura 2000 network** is based on two key European directives:

- **Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)**: It provides the legal framework for the designation and management of Sites of Community Importance (SCI) which, once planning instruments are in place, are subsequently transformed into Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The objective of the protected areas declared under this regulation is to ensure or restore to a favourable conservation status the types of natural habitats listed in Annex I, as well as the habitats of the species included in Annex II.
- **Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)**: It ensures the protection of endangered bird species and their habitats through the designation of Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs).

The Natura 2000 network seeks to balance conservation with sustainable development, promoting economic practices that are compatible with the protection of marine ecosystems. For example, establishing interconnected protected areas allows species to move and reproduce, which is crucial for their survival, especially in the context of climate change and habitat overexploitation. Furthermore, it promotes the sustainable use of natural resources in these areas, balancing conservation with economic activities such as fishing and tourism, helping to maintain local traditions and foster sustainable economies. Finally, the areas protected by the network represent a great opportunity for scientific research and environmental education, as they allow for the study of biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as raising public awareness of the benefits they bring to society and the importance of their conservation.

Specifically, in Italy, SCIs, SACs and SPAs together cover around 19% of the national land area and more than 13% of the marine area. In Spain, this network covers 27.35% of the land area and 18.31% of the marine area. However, as scientific research and environmental policies advance, this network of protected areas is expanding, posing an even greater challenge for their conservation.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for 2030 approved by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: "Bringing nature back into our lives", and the State Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity to 2030, approved by Royal Decree 1057/2022 of 27 December, approving the State Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity to 2030, in application of Act 42/2007, of 13 December, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, include the need to intensify nature protection and, to this end, set a target of 30 % protection and effective management of both land and marine areas.

In this regard, Spain must continue working in this direction, especially in the marine environment, since the Climate Emergency Declaration of the Council of Ministers Agreement of 21 January 2020 includes as an objective, the guarantee of marine biodiversity protection, achieving the aforementioned 30% of marine area protected, through the planning, declaration and management of marine protected areas.



## 2.2. International and National Legislation and Regulation

The implementation of the Natura 2000 Network in the marine environment is aligned with national and international regulations on protected areas, including:

- **International Conventions:**
  - *Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*: Global commitment to biodiversity conservation.
  - *Barcelona Convention*: Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (including the Protocol concerning the Designation of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance or SPAMIs).
  - *OSPAR Convention*: Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic.
  
- **National Regulations:**
  - Act 42/2007, of 13 December, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, which regulates the procedures for declaring protected natural areas at the national level.
  - Act 41/2010, of 29 December, on the protection of the marine environment, which formally creates and regulates the Spanish Network of Marine Protected Areas (RAMPE).
  
- **Other legal instruments:**
  - RAMPE Master Plan<sup>1</sup>, which aims to contribute to the fulfilment of the Network's objectives; to promote effective management of marine protected areas under a model of institutional collaboration; to provide common management criteria that contribute to improving the conservation of the marine environment; to encourage synergies, mutual support, the exchange of experiences and information, and to facilitate intersectoral cooperation in order to contribute to the achievement of international commitments on marine conservation.
  - Marine protected area planning and management instruments: normally approved through legislation, these instruments aim to set out the conservation objectives for a protected area, as well as the appropriate measures (regulatory, non-regulatory, zoning, monitoring, etc.) to ensure the favourable conservation status of the different types of natural habitats and species present in that area.

## 2.3. Governance and Participation in the Management of the Marine Natura 2000 Network

Effective management of the Natura 2000 network requires cooperation between multiple stakeholders:

---

<sup>1</sup> Royal Decree 1056/2022, of 27 December, approving the Master Plan for the Network of Marine Protected Areas in Spain and the minimum common criteria for coordinated and consistent management of the Network.



- **Public Administrations:** National, regional and local governments responsible for planning and regulatory compliance.
- **Scientists and Experts:** Research institutions that provide data on biodiversity and ecosystems
- **Private Sector:** Tourism, fishing and recreational companies operating within protected areas.
- **Local Communities and Civil Society:** Environmental associations, NGOs and citizens play a key role in raising awareness and monitoring regulatory compliance.

Participatory governance is therefore essential to ensure the success of conservation measures, through consultation processes and adaptive co-management.

## 2.4. Challenges in Implementation and Regulatory Compliance

Despite the robust regulatory framework, the implementation of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment faces several challenges:

- **Lack of knowledge and training on regulations** among key stakeholders.
- **Difficulties in monitoring and enforcement** due to the dispersion of marine protected areas and lack of resources.
- **Conflicts of use** between conservation and economic activities (fishing, tourism, maritime transport).
- **Need for monitoring and evaluation tools** to ensure the effectiveness of protective measures.

To overcome these challenges, **it is essential to boost training, inter-institutional cooperation and awareness-raising among stakeholders involved in the marine Natura 2000 network.**

## 3. Importance of training in the Marine Natura 2000 network

Despite the importance of marine protected areas, particularly the marine Natura 2000 network, current knowledge is still insufficient, which greatly hinders the involvement of stakeholders in their conservation. The marine Natura 2000 network training programme addresses these issues by involving and training key stakeholders and other users, a priority identified in the [Capacity Building Strategy](#) developed as part of the **LIFE IP INTEMARES** project. Thus, in order to achieve effective management of marine protected areas, it is extremely important that the management of these areas be based on the best scientific information, in an integrated and participatory manner, involving the sectors concerned and sea users.

Through a training programme on the marine Natura 2000 network, the aim is to strengthen and update the capacities of the various sectors involved in the management and use of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), thereby contributing to more effective management. Having well-trained managers and users in marine protected areas is essential for monitoring and ensuring the effective functioning of conservation efforts. Increasing knowledge through training courses and improving skills in systematic and organised procedures



to acquire professionalism and competencies will increase the individual capacity of individual administrators or local operators and, collectively, that of the managing body.

In this regard, the LIFE A-MAR project aims to highlight the value of EMPs and the role of the marine Natura 2000 network in the conservation of these areas. Action B3 therefore includes the implementation of a training and capacity-building plan aimed at the various management bodies of the marine areas of the Natura 2000 network, as well as other sectors and stakeholders that make use of these areas. This action represents a commitment to strengthening the capacities of the various sectors linked to the management and use of the sea, as well as an excellent opportunity to raise awareness among other users of the role played by the marine Natura 2000 network in conservation.

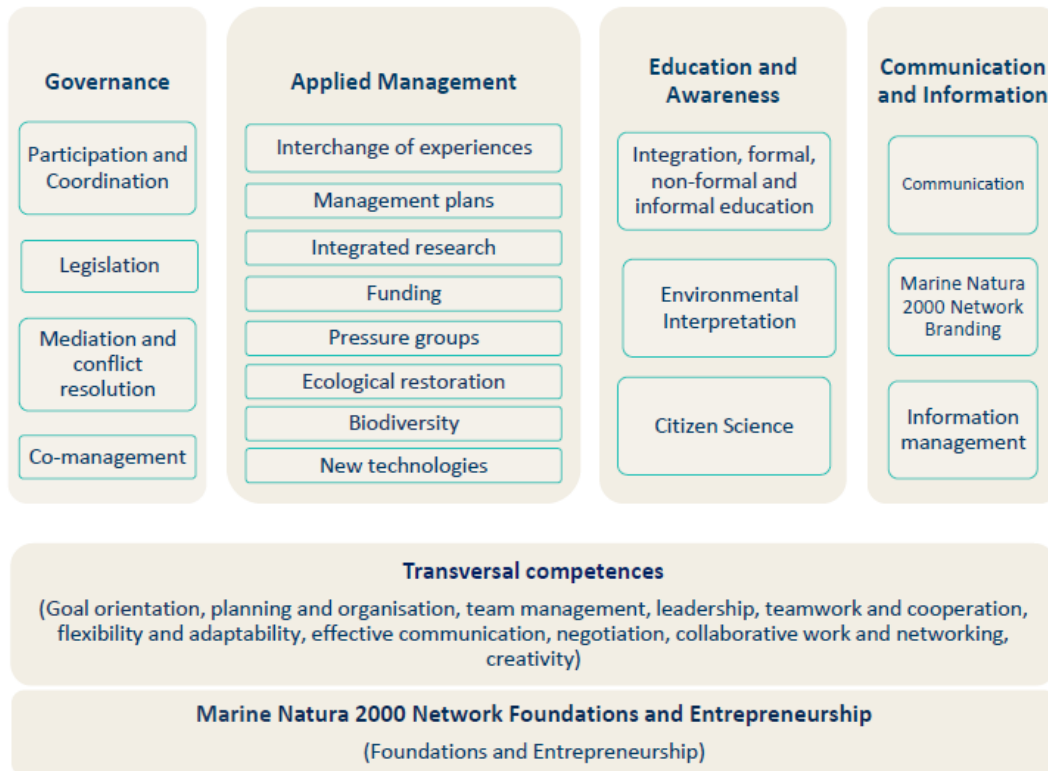
It is essential to raise awareness of conservation instruments among all those who manage or participate in activities in marine environments, highlighting the role of the marine Natura 2000 network, and **to offer training tailored to the specific needs of the different target audiences**. In this way, the marine Natura 2000 network training programme contributes to the objectives of protecting the marine environment by highlighting the enormous natural heritage that Spain and Italy possess.

## 4. Training Strategy: Roadmap for Capacity Building

It has been mentioned on numerous occasions that the marine Natura 2000 Network Training Plan is being implemented in accordance with the guidelines established in the [Capacity Building Strategy](#) developed within the framework of the **LIFE IP INTEMARES** project. This major marine conservation project, launched in 2017, has laid the foundations for the **effective management of the marine areas of the Natura 2000 Network**, becoming one of Spain's biggest commitments to moving towards **the effective, innovative and participatory management of marine protected areas**. A commitment to reconciling the conservation of natural values with the economic activities offered by these areas and consequently taking advantage of the opportunities they offer to generate wealth and employment.

As part of this major marine conservation project, training was identified as a key tool for achieving participation, and consequently the [Capacity Building Strategy](#) for the marine Natura 2000 Network was developed to provide a clear roadmap for implementing training. This strategy, which was developed through a participatory process involving a large team of experts in marine management, conservation and governance, as well as training, education and participation, served to identify the needs of different groups and to offer a training programme tailored to those needs in relation to the management and conservation of the marine Natura 2000 network.

The strategy as a whole establishes **6** well-defined **thematic areas** (Governance, Applied Management, Education and Awareness, Communication and Information, Transversal Skills and Fundamentals, and marine Natura 2000 Network Entrepreneurship) that include **21** training and education programmes and an action plan with 93 actions to be implemented in several phases (see outline of the EC Action Plan in the figure below):



**Figure 1:** Framework for the Capacity Building Action Plan, including thematic divisions and blocks (source: Capacity Building Strategy).

The marine Natura 2000 training plan, which has been promoted thanks to the LIFE A-MAR project (among other initiatives also promoted by the Biodiversity Foundation), is based on this Capacity Building Strategy and, among all the objectives set out in the various programmes it covers (see details of programmes in [Annex 1](#)), aims to achieve the following results:

**The training plan aims to achieve the following results:**

- Raise awareness of the characteristics and dynamics of different marine ecosystems, the interrelationship between the sea and our lives, and the ecosystem services it provides to society in order to **involve different groups in its conservation**.
- Raise awareness of the different **marine conservation and restoration instruments** used to protect the marine environment, highlighting **the role played by the marine Natura 2000 Network** as a conservation tool that promotes economic activities while contributing to the maintenance of ecosystem quality.
- Increase knowledge about the **legislation and regulation of marine areas** in the Natura 2000 network and the responsibilities of sea users and operators, promoting good practices, responsible behaviour, alternatives and sustainable actions for the conservation of the marine environment.
- Raise awareness of the need to protect the sea by helping to **identify the main problems and threats to marine biodiversity, instilling attitudes and values of respect** for the marine environment and conservation.
- Facilitate and make available to the various recipients (both managers and users) of the training activities tools that contribute to involving the different groups in the conservation of the marine environment.



- Acquisition of **practical skills** such as sampling techniques, handling specialised equipment, or data analysis.
- **Professional skills** such as collaborative work in multidisciplinary teams, developing skills to identify environmental problems and design practical and sustainable solutions, or making informed decisions based on data and scientific evidence.
- **Attitudes and values:** developing environmental awareness and a commitment to conservation and sustainability, promoting the adoption of ethical practices in all activities related to the marine environment.

The following section provides details on the implementation of the LIFE A-MAR project training programme in the marine Natura 2000 network.

## 5. LIFE A-MAR Training Plan

The marine Natura 2000 training programme promoted by the LIFE A-MAR project has enabled the implementation of **various training programmes included in the capacity building strategy**, raising awareness of the services provided by ecosystems, promoting skills and strengthening competencies, with the aim of promoting changes in attitudes and fostering messages in favour of the compatibility of the conservation of protected areas and the economic activities they offer.

This training programme on the marine Natura 2000 network as a whole is designed to promote proper governance in marine protected areas through the implementation of **training activities** that improve the capacity for participation, coordination, conflict mediation, monitoring and surveillance of MPAs, and the application of regulatory measures in current management models, as well as actions aimed at disseminating the fundamentals of the Natura 2000 network and its ecological and socio-economic importance.

**Specific content** has also been addressed with the aim of providing training on the regulations and legislation applicable to the marine Natura 2000 network. All European and national regulations on marine protected areas, legislation relating to the mitigation of the impacts of human activities, and content related to highlighting the socio-economic benefits of good marine governance. Among these are the fundamental ecosystem benefits offered by human activities focused on the blue economy, such as sustainable fishing and tourism, to promote a climate of good practices in line with biodiversity conservation.

The **recipients** of this training have been all the actors identified as relevant, including: public administration personnel responsible for implementing the MAP and managing the Natura 2000 network; legislators, judges, prosecutors, state security forces, decision-making bodies and all those involved in the management and use of marine resources (NGOs, environmental consultancies, tour operators, producer organisations, processors and marketers of fishery products, the scientific community and SMEs). The formal and informal educational community (environmental education centres, teachers and primary and secondary school pupils) has also been involved, as well as the general public.

The training sessions have focused on the following content:

- Training of trainers.
- Training in regulations and legislation.
- Educational opportunities to make classrooms more environmentally friendly through the marine Natura 2000 network.
- Action protocols for dealing with entanglements of large cetaceans.



- Training in the identification and recognition of marine species and species of fishing interest.
- Training in protocols for dealing with pollution incidents in protected areas
- Training on permitted uses in protected areas
- Training courses to communicate the marine Natura 2000 network to users (tourists, customers, etc.)
- Training on the ten commandments of good practice in recreational cave diving
- Training on climate change adaptation in EMP

### **Assessment of the marine Natura 2000 training programme**

The training plan for the marine Natura 2000 network developed within the framework of the LIFE A-MAR project has focused primarily on five thematic areas and eight programmes of the Capacity Building Strategy action plan (see action plan in [Annex 1](#)), which has made it possible to address the different objectives defined for each of these programmes in a structured manner. In total, more than 38 training activities have been implemented, reaching more than 900 people. The results of these actions are summarised in Table 1 below, which systematically shows the correspondence between the actions carried out and the main lines of the Training Strategy action plan.

The training activities carried out to date within the framework of LIFE A-MAR show significant progress in the implementation of the marine Natura 2000 Network Training Strategy, with programmes ranging from the governance and management of marine protected areas to awareness-raising, communication and the mitigation of impacts resulting from human activities. The thematic diversity of the training activities has made it possible to address regulatory, technical, scientific and communication aspects in an integrated manner, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges associated with marine conservation.

Furthermore, the participation of a wide range of sectors—public administrations, EMP managers, law enforcement agencies, the tourism and nautical sector, educators and companies linked to the recreational use of the marine environment, among others—reinforces the cross-cutting nature of the strategy and its clear focus on practical application. This approach helps to generate a common knowledge base, strengthen capacities among the various groups involved, and promote greater shared responsibility for the conservation of the marine Natura 2000 network across different areas of intervention.



**Table 1: Summary of the implementation of the marine Natura 2000 training programme within the framework of the LIFE A-MAR project.**

Topic Area	Building Capacity training programs	Objectives	Content of the trainings	Sectors (stakeholders)
<b>Governance</b>	1. Training program to increase participation and improve coordination and achieve better governance of the marine Natura 2000 Network	O.4. Training in Good Practice in environmental and sustainability protocols related to biodiversity conservation	Presentation of good practices for the capacity building strategy to MPA Managers	MPA Managers and LIFE A-MAR stakeholders
		O.4. Training in Good Practice in environmental and sustainability protocols related to biodiversity conservation	Training in Good Practice protocols for cave diving in MPAs	Dive operators, MPA Managers, Marine Environmental Agents of the Ministry of the Environment and other users
	3. Training program in marine Natura 2000 Network regulations and their application, integrating the principle of governance	O.11. Training in regulations and legislations of marine Nature 2000 Network O.16. Improving knowledge on administrative powers legislation	Regulations, legislation (case studies)	Maritime Service of the Civil Guard and SEPRONA
		O.11. Training in regulations and legislations of marine Nature 2000 Network O.16. Improving knowledge on administrative powers legislation	Training of trainers focused on practical aspects of the MPA and Marine Natura 2000 Network Regulations	Maritime Service of the Civil Guard and SEPRONA
		O.13. Training in understanding and promoting the development of regulations of the sectors involved in marine Nature 2000 Network. Adaptation of UN Model to marine Nature 2000 Network. O.14. Developing training programs specific to Nature 2000 Network, improving sanctions regimes	Regulations, legislation, sanctioning regimes	Environmental State legislators
<b>Applied Management</b>	8. Program to integrate research in marine Natura 2000 Network management	O.8. Training in identification, drafting and implementation of research projects for getting new knowledge for the integral management of marine Nature 2000 Network	Protocols for the analysis of the vulnerability of MPA to Climate Change	MPA Managers
	9. Training program in impact mitigation measures	O.17. Training in spotting, identifying and recording techniques of marine mammals and other protected marine fauna species O.19. Training in distribution areas and habitat use of cetaceans and others where overlaps in vessel operations may occur species of interest	Training of trainers: action plan and protocols in MPA in case of pollutants	Navy and Maritime Rescue
		O.17. Training in spotting, identifying and recording techniques of marine mammals and other protected marine fauna species O.19. Training in distribution areas and habitat use of cetaceans and others where overlaps in vessel operations may occur species of interest	Training in Regulations on large cetaceans Watching companies	cetaceans watching companies
		O.19. Training in distribution areas and habitat use of cetaceans and others where overlaps in vessel operations may occur species of interest	Action protocol for the entanglements of large cetaceans by the IWC	Maritime Service of the Civil Guard and SEPRONA, maritime rescue, Tragsatec, cetaceans watching companies, Marine Environmental Agents of the Ministry of the Environment
		O.17. Training in spotting, identifying and recording techniques of marine mammals and other protected marine fauna species	Training in the identification of vulnerable marine species vs. marine species of fishing interest, for their surveillance and protection	Marine Environmental Agents of the Ministry of the Environment
		O.17. Training in spotting, identifying and recording techniques of marine mammals and other protected marine fauna species		Maritime Service of the Civil Guard and SEPRONA



Topic Area	Building Capacity training programs	Objectives	Content of the trainings	Sectors (stakeholders)
Education & awareness	13. Training program in the marine Natura 2000 Network integrated into formal and informal education	O.3. Knowing the principles and needed elements to promote blue schools through the marine Nature 2000 Network using programmed actions and awareness campaigns (as the week of marine Nature 2000 Network)	Promoting blue schools through the marine Natura 2000 Network	Environmental educators and primary school teachers
	14. Training program for guides and interpreters of marine Nature 2000 Network	O.8. Acquiring the necessary skills for the design of self-guided and guided interpretive itineraries adapted to the marine Nature 2000 Network and applicable regulations O.9. Making known benefits, socioeconomic and environmental values of marine Nature 2000 Network	Interpreted itineraries in marine Nature 2000 Network	Fishing tourism operators, fishers, shellfish gatherers and other users of marine Nature 2000 Network
Communication	16. Marine Natura 2000 Network Communication Training program	O.1. Training in communication and effective divulgation to value the natural and cultural heritage O.7. Training in communication and divulgation techniques of environmental good practices O.9. Making known benefits, socioeconomic and environmental values of marine Nature 2000 Network	How to explain the marine Natura 2000 Network to your clients_ Training in best practices	Tourism and coastal operators (recreational boating, diving, kayaking, sightseeing, nature guides, etc.)
Marine Natura 2000 Network foundations & Entrepreneurship	20. Training program in the foundations of the marine Natura 2000 Network	O.3. Training in marine ecosystems, habitats and species and in management plans and activities within Nature 2000 Network	Regulations, legislation, impact mitigation, species identification	Navy and Maritime Rescue



## 6. Lessons learned and challenges in implementing the training plan

### 6.1 Evaluation of the implementation of the training plan for the marine Natura 2000 network

Based on a systematic analysis of the experiences gained during the implementation of the marine Natura 2000 training programme, within the framework of the LIFE A-MAR project, a SWOT matrix has been built that summarises the main lessons learned from the process.

This analysis combines the results obtained from the evaluations collected in the various training activities carried out in Spain, as well as the lessons learned from working with technical assistance (TA) providers, bidders and other collaborating entities or actors involved in the implementation of the programme. These training activities—designed with specific objectives and content—were evaluated by both the participants and the entities responsible for their implementation, enabling the identification of **weaknesses, threats, strengths, and opportunities** that have influenced their development. Based on this information, a framework for reflection has been developed with a view to **improving the planning, design and management of future training initiatives**.

The purpose of this matrix is to **translate the SWOT analysis into practical and operational guidelines**, facilitating its integration into contractual design, governance, planning and implementation processes. To this end, the findings have been reorganised into thematic blocks that provide a quick overview of the main challenges identified, the key recommendations for addressing them, the actors responsible for implementing them, and the specific areas where they should be integrated—whether in the ToR, the coordination phases, logistics, evaluation, or programme communication. This structure aims to facilitate the practical application of learning and serve as a guide for technical teams, managers, and entities responsible for future editions of the programme.

Overall, the analysis reveals that **the programme has benefited from elements that have favoured its implementation**, such as the value of active methodology and the importance of institutional coordination, but it also highlights **aspects that have hindered its development**, such as logistical challenges, diversity of audience profiles and unforeseen administrative burdens. Identifying these aspects is essential for consolidating a continuous improvement approach and guiding more effective training strategies in the future. Table 2 below presents a summary matrix that brings together these lessons in an integrated, functional and decision-oriented manner.

**Table 2: Summary of the SWOT analysis of the implementation of the RN2KM training programme**

BLOCK	CHALLENGE	KEY RECOMMENDATION	WHO SHOULD TAKE ACTION	WHERE TO INTEGRATE IT
<b>1. Programme design and scope</b>	<b>Ambiguity of the object of the contract, solvency vs. actual complexity, external validations that cause delays.</b>	Clear objectives at each stage; proportionality; validations as a prerequisite.	Contracting authority	Object/Scope; Solvency criteria; Prerequisites; Registration.
<b>2. Governance and inter-institutional coordination</b>	<b>Diffuse roles, dependence on third parties, and poor inter-institutional communication.</b>	Organisational chart, contact points and monitoring committees; contingency plans.	Contracting authority / TA.	Organisation and coordination; Risk management; Conditions of implementation; Communication.
<b>3. Temporary planning and logistics</b>	<b>Tight schedules, late start and logistical/meteorological constraints.</b>	Phases with slack; adjustments for delays; logistical analysis and alternative formats. Include a contingency plan.	Contracting authority / TA.	Execution period and schedule; Logistics plan; Changes to conditions.
<b>4. Methodology and adaptation to the target audience</b>	<b>Heterogeneous profiles, mismatch between expectations and needs/abandonment, motivation</b>	Diagnosis of recipients; active methodologies; expectation management. Meaningful learning. Teaching team	Contracting authority / TA	Training design; Teaching guide; Target audience; Dissemination.
<b>5. Teaching resources and digital tools</b>	<b>Digital divide and the need for reusable materials/ accessible</b>	Compatible platforms; reusable repositories; technological standards.	Contracting authority / TA / technical support.	Technical resources; Training tools; Products; Technical design.
<b>6. Assessment, monitoring and impact</b>	<b>Difficulty in measuring practical application and lack of deferred follow-up.</b>	Indicators qualitative and quantitative; 90/180-day surveys; communication of results.	Contracting authority / TA / Communication	Evaluation system; Indicators; Monitoring and closure.
<b>7. Risks and contingencies in the marine context</b>	<b>Adverse weather conditions, accessibility to training venues and unforeseen requirements.</b>	Risk map; accessibility verification; budget reserve for contingencies.	TA / contracting authority	Risk management; Logistics plan; Conditions of implementation; Planning.
<b>8. Continuity, networks and recognition</b>	<b>Need for programme sustainability and increased commitment/participation.</b>	Multi-year itineraries; cross-sector networks; participation credits; communication plan.	Contracting authority / TA / Autonomous Community / MEFP Communication	ToR (continuity); Planning (credits); Implementation (communication); Evaluation.

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## Capacity Building Strategy in marine Nature 2000 Network



### STRENGTHS



- Collaboration & Support from institutions
- Close monitoring of actions, team building  
→ +trust & efectivity
- Alliances creation among key sectors and actors, widening reach
- Active and experiential methodologies, tailored to all audiences and territories (+relevance)
- Faculty quality and credibility
- Dissemination of quality resources

### WEAKNESSES

- Ambiguous program objective and scope.
- Unclear roles and governance.
- Overly tight planning and timelines.
- Impractical and/or poorly adapted methodology.
- Administrative limitations in contract management (delays restrict the implementation schedule).
- External dependencies without a contingency plan.
- Weak evaluation and impact assessment.

S  
W  
O  
T

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Networking & stable alliances → continuity, trust, strategy escalating.
- Social increasing interest in sustainability → diferencial value for key sectors.
- Continuous and systematic evaluation, constant improvement of training design.
- Post-training support, medium- and long-term impact.
- Seeking incentives and recognition of added value.

### THREATS

- Regulatory changes.
- Institutional intermediation vs. dependence on third parties.
- Low participation/motivation due to sectoral seasonality.
- Uncertain funding/continuity.
- Territorial sensitivity affects operational efficiency.
- Adverse weather conditions.



## 6.2 Key lessons learned

Several key lessons can be drawn from the analysis and evaluation of the marine Natura 2000 training programme, providing insight into which factors have contributed most significantly to its success, and which should be reinforced in future versions:

- **Contextualisation is essential:** The most successful trainings were those adapted to the environmental, territorial, and socio-cultural characteristics of the location.
- **Active participation improves results:** Participatory approaches strengthened commitment and encouraged ownership of the content.
- **Interdisciplinarity enriches the educational process:** The presence of professionals from different fields allowed marine conservation challenges to be addressed from a comprehensive perspective.
- **Post-training support is key:** Programmes that incorporated follow-up demonstrated greater practical application of what had been learned.
- **Making impacts visible motivates action:** Showing concrete results and success stories helped to mobilise and engage new audiences.
- **The practical approach facilitates knowledge transfer:** Field activities, simulations, and applied exercises strengthened understanding and integration of the content.



## 7. Best practices and recommendations in training

After analysing in detail the results of the training programme developed within the framework of the LIFE A-MAR project, as well as the evaluations carried out by participants and responsible teams, the previous chapter identified a solid set of **challenges, lessons learned and opportunities for improvement**. The SWOT analysis and lessons learned highlighted key aspects related to programme governance, logistics, methodological suitability, diversity of the target audience, the importance of evaluation, and the decisive role of communication and strategic alliances in the success of the training programmes implemented.

On this diagnostic basis, this section aims to **translate these lessons into concrete proposals for action** to strengthen the quality, relevance and impact of future training initiatives linked to marine conservation and the Natura 2000 network. It is therefore a question of moving from reflection to practice: **from what we have learnt to what we recommend doing**.

These recommendations have been organised around **fundamental best practices**, grouped into thematic blocks that provide logical continuity to the approach used in the SWOT matrix. This framework allows us to move from identifying challenges to formulating applicable solutions, addressing key aspects such as training design, adaptation to diverse audiences, inclusion of local agents, the need for a long-term vision, building alliances, strategic communication, use of technology, and the importance of continuous evaluation.

Based on the lessons learned and the challenges identified, the following recommendations are proposed for future marine conservation training activities linked to the Natura 2000 network. These recommendations seek to strengthen the role of training as a driver of transformation for more effective, inclusive and sustainable marine conservation, and to guide the decision-making of technical teams, management entities, public administrations and local actors who participate or will participate in these training processes.

The following is a structured presentation of **the good practices identified**, together with the **associated operational recommendations**, which form the core of this chapter.



Table 3: Best practices and recommendations for implementing a training programme on the marine Natura 2000 network

Best practices	Recommendations
<p><b>Design of the tailored training plan</b></p>	
<p><b>Design flexible training courses tailored to different profiles:</b> taking into account different levels of knowledge, available time and motivations.</p>	<p>Many of the methodologies used in skills development follow <b>standardised procedures</b> that do not adequately consider the <b>differences between target groups</b>. Factors such as level of education, profession, place of residence, or prior knowledge of the subject are key elements that are often overlooked. Furthermore, the inclusion of <b>general messages</b> further limits the effectiveness of training programmes, as they fail to connect with the real interests or needs of the target audience.</p> <p>This results in <b>training programmes that are poorly adapted</b>, which are unlikely to significantly improve participants' skills and, in many cases, fail to capture their interest.</p> <p>Therefore, it is essential that the design of the training plan be based on a rigorous <b>analysis of the particularities of the target group</b>, including their level of knowledge on the subject to be covered, their availability, and their motivations. Only then will it be possible to offer training alternatives that facilitate the participation of as many people as possible. This may involve, for example, <b>incorporating distance learning modalities</b>, developing <b>differentiated pathways based on knowledge levels or professional profiles</b>, and adapting content to the specific needs and interests of each group (IUCN and CMAP; 2015).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Illustrative example:</b> in the case of the marine Natura 2000 network, this can translate into proposals as diverse as practical workshops for nautical tourism professionals focused on how to integrate marine conservation into their activities; age-appropriate educational activities for schoolchildren in the vicinity of protected areas; or short, accessible and visual training courses for local fishermen, aimed at strengthening their knowledge of sensitive species or areas of greatest ecological value. This promotes more effective and inclusive training that is aligned with the real contexts of the different audiences involved.</li> </ul>



**Ensure the inclusion of local stakeholders in decision-making and the design of the training plan:** compiling the needs and issues identified by local stakeholders.

The success of conservation actions is closely linked to the participation of a variety of actors involved in the protection, management, and interpretation of biodiversity (Brooks et al.). In this regard, it is particularly important to ensure the active inclusion of local stakeholders, who have in-depth knowledge of the territory and its dynamics, as well as the specific challenges they face (Porzecanski et al., 2022).

**Involving local stakeholders from the early stages of training design** not only improves the relevance of content and methods, but also **strengthens commitment** to long-term conservation processes. Listening to their needs, identifying specific issues from their perspective and considering their proposals promotes a more collaborative, tailored and effective approach to training related to the marine Natura 2000 network.

♦ **Illustrative example:** before designing a training programme for recreational nautical activities in a marine protected area, it may be essential to conduct interviews or focus groups with representatives from sailing clubs, kayak rental companies or diving schools.

Based on these listening spaces, specific barriers can be identified, such as the lack of awareness-raising materials tailored to customers, or a lack of knowledge about access limitations in certain sensitive areas. These inputs enable the design of more tailored training, with content that is truly useful and applicable to these stakeholders, thereby increasing their involvement and positive impact on the marine environment.

To ensure the participation of all stakeholders in the meetings, we recommend using group facilitation tools that can be found in [this WWF guide](#) for trainers.

**Working on long-term planning:** including a broader view in the development of training programmes

One of the most common problems in skills-building programmes is short-termism, reflected in one-off training courses that lack continuity and are not integrated into complementary strategies or initiatives. This lack of long-term vision has been identified by numerous authors as one of the main causes of the limited impact of many skills-building plans (Porzecanski et al., 2022) (IUCN and CMAP; 2015).

According to these authors, overcoming this limitation involves, on the one hand, establishing mechanisms for monitoring and analysing how training strategies evolve over time and, on the other, setting more ambitious goals that go beyond a single training session (Porzecanski et al., 2022: 674).

Designing training programmes with a view to continuity and long-term learning not only allows for more in-depth study of the content covered and periodic review but also helps to generate greater commitment on the part of participants. This long-term perspective facilitates more meaningful learning, avoiding superficiality, and reinforces the sustainability of the knowledge and skills acquired.

♦ **Illustrative example:** a training course aimed at tour guides operating in Red Natura 2000 marine areas could begin with an initial session on awareness and basic knowledge of marine biodiversity, followed by specialised modules on interpreting natural heritage, responsible practices with visitors, and communicating key messages. In addition, a mentoring system, forums for sharing experiences, or annual updates with new content or identified best practices could be considered. In this way, a learning community is created that maintains a link with conservation over time, promoting sustained improvements in both professional performance and environmental protection.



Strategic alliances	
<p><b>Promote partnerships between key stakeholders:</b> involving public administrations, universities, NGOs, the tourism sector, local authorities and coastal communities.</p>	<p>The development and sustainability of training programmes on the marine Natura 2000 network requires the building of strategic alliances between diverse actors who share a commitment to marine conservation. Establishing stable collaboration agreements with public administrations, research centres, universities, NGOs and maritime sector entities is an effective way to ensure the continuity, consistency and updating of training activities in the medium and long term (IUCN and CMAP; 2015).</p> <p>Having <b>databases of strategic partners</b> is extremely useful for facilitating joint work between entities, enabling the creation of cooperation networks between groups, territories and sectors. In this regard, it is also advisable to <b>create working groups or multisectoral coordination groups</b> that bring together the various actors involved in marine conservation, creating spaces for dialogue where needs, resources, experiences and knowledge can be shared. It is recommended to use participatory methodologies or to have facilitators to ensure the effectiveness of these meetings.</p> <p><b>Promoting synergies with existing programmes</b>—such as sustainable tourism, responsible fishing, or environmental education initiatives—allows training to be integrated into broader territorial strategies, reinforcing its legitimacy and scope. Furthermore, when partnerships manage to <b>link training with public policies or institutionalised lines of action</b>, their long-term sustainability is enhanced.</p> <p>It is essential to encourage the active participation of local communities and, in particular, maritime professionals, not only as recipients of training, but also as <b>key players in its design, implementation and dissemination</b>. Their empirical knowledge of the marine environment, their constant presence in the territory and their direct link with visitors, sea users and coastal communities make them indispensable allies in transforming knowledge into action and multiplying the impact of good practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Illustrative example:</b> in a coastal area with a strong presence of artisanal fishing and nautical tourism, a partnership was promoted between the fishermen's association, a local university, the regional administration and an environmental NGO. Together they created a modular training programme aimed at fishermen, kayak instructors and diving guides. The programme included theoretical sessions, practical field trips and the co-creation of informative materials. The maritime professionals themselves participated as trainers in some modules, sharing traditional knowledge and best practices. This collaboration not only facilitated greater ownership of the content by the community but also generated a stable network for joint work that gave rise to new community initiatives linked to marine conservation.</li> </ul>

Adapt communication and dissemination strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keys to effective communication about the marine Natura 2000 network.</li> <li>• Use of social media and digital platforms: creation of engaging content.</li> <li>• Support in partnerships to amplify the message: creation of collaborative networks with other key actors for the dissemination of messages and transfer of results.</li> <li>• Brand image of the project</li> </ul>	<p>Effective communication about the marine Natura 2000 network is key to its acceptance, ownership and success. As with training design, communication must be developed in a participatory manner and supported by strategic alliances that reinforce messages, ensure their consistency, and multiply their reach through social media, the media, and institutional platforms.</p> <p>One of the main communication challenges is to clearly convey that the Natura 2000 network <b>does not seek to restrict economic development</b>, but rather to promote the <b>sustainable use of natural resources</b>, compatible with the conservation of marine biodiversity. Therefore, it is essential to communicate the expected <b>benefits</b> of its implementation in a comprehensible and appealing manner. Showing examples of good practices—both traditional and innovative—helps to contextualise the message and identify real opportunities for action for the different sectors involved (MITECO and MICT; 2020).</p> <p>The use of <b>social media, blogs, websites and other digital channels</b> allows people, institutions and associations to connect, bringing new audiences closer to the value of protecting marine Natura 2000 areas. For this communication to be effective, it is recommended to use clear and visual language, adapt the content to each target audience (e.g. citizens, maritime professionals, tourism sector) and encourage interaction.</p> <p>Creating <b>collaborative networks for the joint dissemination of messages</b> helps to reinforce the legitimacy of the message and broaden its reach. Local associations, NGOs, tourism and educational companies can become natural advocates for the values of the marine Natura 2000 Network if they feel they are an active part of the process. To this end, a unified <b>"brand image"</b> is sought, with visually striking materials and even products and items that reinforce <b>the image of the project</b>.</p> <div data-bbox="718 1500 1228 1904" data-label="Image"> </div>



Finally, **training activities can also be powerful channels of communication if they are designed with an engaging, participatory and practical approach.** These training courses not only transfer knowledge, but also foster commitment and can act as platforms for the development of communication initiatives (campaigns, videos, materials, etc.). This enables continued cooperation between stakeholders and reinforces the knowledge acquired.

◆ **Illustrative example:** in a communication campaign carried out on a Mediterranean island, a group of water sports guides, after receiving training on the Natura 2000 marine network, created a series of short videos for social media explaining what the network is and how their work fits into it. The videos, filmed in local marine environments and featuring the professionals themselves, were shared on their profiles and those of the collaborating organisations. The authenticity of the message and its direct link to the local community made it possible to reach a wide audience, build trust, and dispel some misconceptions about marine protection. The initiative became a replicable benchmark for other areas of the network.



**Highlighting the links between conservation and well-being:**

emphasising the social, cultural and economic benefits of conserving the marine environment. These recommendations seek to strengthen the role of training as a driver of transformation for more effective, inclusive, and sustainable marine conservation.

The conservation of marine areas, such as those included in the Natura 2000 network, is essential to ensuring the social, cultural and economic well-being of communities. It is not only about protecting the environment, but also about promoting a way of life that ensures the sustainability of natural resources for present and future generations (MITECO and MICT; 2020).

The **social benefits of the Natura 2000 network** are innumerable. These areas not only provide vital ecosystem services, such as regulating water resources and protecting against natural disasters (floods, droughts, fires), but are also essential for recreational activities and tourism, key sectors for the economy of many coastal regions. Furthermore, by protecting marine biodiversity, the Network contributes to the livelihoods of productive sectors such as fishing, ecotourism and agriculture, especially with regard to pollinators that are crucial for crops (MITECO and MICT; 2020).

From an **economic** perspective, marine biodiversity conservation has a direct impact on reducing the costs associated with natural resource management. The economic valuation of biodiversity becomes a key tool for understanding the magnitude of its contribution to society, as well as the costs of its degradation. This assessment helps to make informed decisions about conservation policies, highlighting the most sustainable alternatives.

**Culturally**, the landscapes protected by the Natura 2000 network are key elements of identity for many coastal communities, linked to their traditions and ways of life. Conserving these landscapes not only protects nature, but also preserves the cultural foundations of the community, encouraging intergenerational cooperation and respect for natural heritage.

The participation of local actors in conservation processes, **including landowners, users, NGOs and economic sectors**, is essential for developing sustainable models of production and consumption. It is necessary to create spaces for **collaboration and dialogue** in which all stakeholders feel part of the process, from decision-making to strategy implementation, which in turn increases commitment to and the success of conservation policies.

Finally, **training** plays a crucial role in this process, as it raises awareness and empowers communities and professionals who work directly with natural resources, facilitating the transition to sustainable practices that benefit both people and the environment (MITECO and MICT; 2020).

- ◆ **Illustrative example:** as part of the LIFE A-MAR project, a **sailing and citizen science campaign** has been carried out in parallel with training activities. These actions, carried out at various key points along the Levantine-Balearic maritime boundary, included various activities aimed at fishermen, nautical tourism operators,



	<p>environmental educators and interested members of the public. This campaign included <b>practical workshops in the port, sea trips with expert guides, bird and whale watching, awareness-raising activities in educational centres, and interpretive stops</b> during the nautical routes to explain the ecological value of the marine areas of the Natura 2000 Network.</p> <p>In addition to improving knowledge on marine biodiversity and ecosystem services, the campaign encouraged active involvement by participants through <b>citizen science</b> activities, such as recording sightings, identifying species and collecting data on water quality. Collaboration between fishermen, tourism companies, NGOs and educational centres has enabled the creation of a strong network of allies in marine conservation, facilitating a shift towards more sustainable practices and generating new economic opportunities linked to ecotourism and environmental interpretation. This experience reinforces the idea that <b>training linked to the territory and local actors is key to strengthening marine conservation and the well-being of coastal communities.</b></p>
<p><b>Recommended activities and dynamics (practical examples)</b></p>	<p>Effective training in the context of the marine Natura 2000 network requires methodologies that promote active public involvement and facilitate the connection between technical knowledge and the reality of the environment. Below are some key recommendations:</p>
<p><b>Applying active, participant-centred methodologies:</b> prioritising meaningful learning, participation, group work and real-world problem solving.</p>	<p><b>Participatory methodologies</b> enable attendees to take centre stage in the training process, facilitating greater knowledge retention and motivation.</p> <p>◆ <b>Illustrative examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the port workshops of the navigation and citizen science campaign, "collective mapping" dynamics were used to identify uses of the sea and possible impacts on protected areas.</li> <li>• Role-playing games were used to simulate decision-making processes regarding human activities in marine protected areas (e.g. fishing, tourism, conservation).</li> <li>• In the sessions with schoolchildren, cooperative games were used, such as educational gymkhanas with clues about marine biodiversity or giant boards about species and habitats.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contextualisation of knowledge</b> through the implementation of practical activities in marine and coastal environments</p>	<p>Learning that takes place in the territory has a <b>greater impact</b>. It allows participants to <b>directly observe</b> natural values, threats and conservation opportunities, <b>connecting theory with practice</b>. Take advantage of <b>citizen science</b> methodologies, making participants feel useful in the conservation of marine areas and</p>

	<p>reinforcing their knowledge (the principle of knowing in order to protect and, beyond that, using what we know to protect what we do not know).</p> <p>◆ <b>Illustrative examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boat trips provided an opportunity to observe birds and cetaceans, with explanations of their behaviour and habitats.</li> <li>• The interpretive stops addressed topics such as Posidonia, ecosystem benefits, and the relationship between human activity and biodiversity.</li> <li>• Participatory water quality sampling and marine litter collection were organised, linking this data to the conservation status of Natura 2000 sites.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Encouraging co-creation of content:</b> integrating technical and local knowledge into the design of materials and activities.</p>	<p>Content that responds to the reality and prior knowledge of the participants. This reinforces the sense of belonging and <b>commitment to conservation</b>.</p> <p>◆ <b>Illustrative examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information panels were developed with <b>contributions from local fishermen</b>, who shared their knowledge about marine species and cycles.</li> <li>• During the workshops, participants were asked to create awareness messages or short videos to share on social media, including nautical sayings, local stories, and scientific messages.</li> <li>• In educational centres, classroom projects were promoted in which students interviewed marine professionals and built models or comics to explain the benefits of the marine Natura 2000 network.</li> </ul>
<b>Technology as an ally</b>	
<p><b>Leveraging technology to expand reach:</b> through the use of virtual platforms, interactive tools, and digital content.</p>	<p>Technology can be a powerful ally in expanding the reach of training activities, improving participation and strengthening collaboration between stakeholders linked to the marine Natura 2000 network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expand the scope</b> The use of virtual platforms, social networks, mobile applications, and websites allows content to reach a wider audience, regardless of their geographical location. In addition, they encourage continuous participation before, during, and after face-to-face activities.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Accessible and functional design</b> Digital resources should be <b>intuitive, accessible, and visually appealing</b>, designed for diverse audiences with varying levels of knowledge and technological skills. Good design enhances the learning experience and makes it easier to consult and reuse content.</li> <li>• <b>Interactive tools</b> The use of tools such as questionnaires, collaborative maps, collective whiteboards, immersive videos, podcasts, or virtual tours can generate <b>greater interest and engagement</b> with the subject matter. These tools enable personalised learning, adapted pacing, and encourage active participation. In addition, there are other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p><a href="#">educational platforms</a> based on digital games that enable the creation of interactive quizzes, word clouds, surveys, and live contests to make education more entertaining and participatory, such as Kahoot, Mentimeter, Slido, and many other options.</p> <p>In fact, education through play can be a very useful tool. For example, "<a href="#">serious games</a>", focused on coastal and marine conservation, management and adaptation, are designed for purposes beyond mere entertainment and can be a powerful tool for teaching, engaging stakeholders, conducting research and evaluating public policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complementarity with face-to-face learning</b> Technology does not replace field experience, but it can <b>effectively complement it</b>. Through prior audiovisual content or subsequent follow-up platforms, what has been learned in the practical activities is reinforced and deepened.</li> <li>♦ <b>Illustrative example:</b> during the navigation and citizen science campaign carried out in the Levantine-Balearic maritime area, the <a href="#">project's web application of LIFE A-MAR</a> was used as a key tool for actively involving the participating public. This <i>app</i> allowed users to share content about marine species that were being identified in real time, as well as access short videos, downloadable fact sheets, and maps of the marine Natura 2000 Network sites visited along the route. Through the use of this tool, the connection between learning, technology, and conservation was facilitated, creating an enriched and collaborative learning experience that enhanced citizen participation and the generation of shared knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation and Impact</b>	
<p><b>Include formative assessments and impact indicators:</b> these enable the quality of the process and the changes generated in the environment to be evaluated.</p>	<p>Assessment should be considered a key process not only for improving the quality of training activities, but also for <b>measuring their real impact in the social, organisational and ecological contexts</b> in which they take place. Evaluating not only what is taught, but what is transformed (IUCN and CMAP, 2015).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Training and continuous assessment</b> Having assessment mechanisms in place throughout the training process, both from the students' and the teaching team's point of view, allows for the <b>adjustment of content, methodologies and materials</b> based on actual learning, identified needs and observed results. Thanks to continuous evaluation by participants and the training team itself, <b>areas for improvement</b> have been identified and taken into account in subsequent editions, significantly raising the level of satisfaction and the results obtained. It is advisable to use participatory methodologies, which are included below.</li> <li>• <b>Impact indicators</b></li> </ul>

	<p>In addition to assessing the development and quality of the sessions, it is essential to design indicators that allow <b>the impact to be measured at various levels</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>At the individual level</b>: acquisition of knowledge, changes in attitudes and practices.</li><li>○ <b>At the organisational level</b>: improvements in protocols, coordination between teams, more sustainable decision-making.</li><li>○ <b>At the territorial or systemic level</b>: contribution to the conservation status of habitats or species, creation of collaborative networks, impact on local regulations or action plans.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>From products to impacts</b><p>According to Porzecanski et al. (2022:674), there is a growing intention to document results beyond the products generated (reports, materials), focusing on the <b>sustained effects on the system</b>. However, in practice, this remains a <b>significant challenge</b>, especially when there are no well-defined indicators or follow-up after training.</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ <b>Illustrative example</b>: in the training courses developed for the <b>Civil Guard Maritime Service</b>, <b>practical cases adapted to their operational reality</b> and spaces for group reflection were integrated. This enabled critical issues and opportunities for improvement to be identified in a participatory manner, which were incorporated into subsequent editions. This direct feedback, together with minor methodological adjustments, resulted in a <b>notable increase in student satisfaction and improved engagement</b>, as reflected in subsequent surveys and interviews.</li></ul></li></ul>
--	--

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Capacity Building Strategy in marine Nature 2000 Network



### Training tailored to specific profiles

1

Considering different levels of knowledge, needs, and motivations. Audience, language and duration.



### Include local stakeholders from the start

2

Gathering knowledge, needs, and problems identified by local stakeholders.



### Long-term vision

Including a broader perspective with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms



3

### Multi-sector strategic alliances

Combining efforts among different key actors in the territory: administrations, tourism, fishing, citizens.



4

### Active and participatory methodologies

5

Collaborative dynamics to promote meaningful learning.



### Clear and collaborative communication

6

Promote respectful exchanges and empathy with biodiversity.



### Conservation is well-being

Highlighting the links between conservation and a good quality of life.



7

### Technology as an ally

To broaden the scope.



8

### Evaluate to improve

9

Integrate participatory assessments for continuous improvement.



These recommendations strengthen the role of training as a driver of transformation for more effective, inclusive, and sustainable marine conservation.





## 8. Examples of other training programmes

### 8.1. LIFE ENABLE Programme

The project [LIFE ENABLE](#) (now the **e-Natura2000.edu After-LIFE initiative**) launched a series of key initiatives aimed at training RN2000 site managers across Europe, which serve as examples of best practice in training design.

One of its initiatives was to set up a new and innovative training centre for managers of the Natura 2000 network and protected areas across Europe: the [European Nature Academy](#) (ENA). ENA is a training platform offering accessible, open-access programmes tailored to participants, using a hybrid approach combining face-to-face and online learning. Furthermore, through a rigorous selection process for trainers and the use of innovative, practice-oriented methodologies, they offer a wide range of courses: from scientific training to training for trainers. The features of this platform are:

- Blended learning methodologies combining face-to-face and online learning
- Use of new digital technologies
- Wide range of courses
- Competency-based learning
- A practical, applied and peer-led approach
- Exchange of experiences among participants
- Continuous learning communities
- Networking
- Teaching people how to work
- Teamwork

Furthermore, as part of the LIFE ENABLE project, the free online Training Needs Assessment tool evaluates both [individual](#) and [group skills](#), in order to identify the training and capacity-building needs of the RN2000 stakeholders, thereby enabling the appropriate activities to be requested and developed.

Finally, there is the [APP eNatura2000](#) mobile app, which connects managers and landowners of the RN2000 network, providing a platform for discussion and mutual learning.

### 8.2. MedPAN

[MedPAN](#) (the network of managers of European marine protected areas) developed a training plan as part of its strategy, based on a participatory process:

- Establishment of regional training centres
- Workshops for sharing experiences
- Technical exchange visits
- Thematic working groups
- Support for small-scale projects
- Thematic working groups and the Forum on Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (which brings together all stakeholders in this field)
- An online platform offering free management resources and support tools for the whole community

The aim is therefore to bring together managers of European protected areas so that they can work together, sharing knowledge and experience and providing relevant training and capacity-building. This achieves a



twofold objective: **tailored and enriched peer-to-peer training, and the creation of strategic partnerships for conservation.**

### 8.3. EUROPARC-España

[EUROPARC-España](#), a platform for the management and protection of terrestrial and marine areas, carries out the following activities to **promote cooperation and partnerships** among stakeholders involved in the management of protected natural areas:

- Visits by technical staff and groups from various protected areas facing similar challenges.
- Involvement of stakeholders in working groups within sectoral forums and thematic committees.

It makes an **effort in communication** in order to encourage those stakeholders who are not yet fully engaged and to overcome the barriers identified through:

- Periodicals
- Awards for best practice
- Conferences to bring managers together

Finally, it is not only based on training and knowledge transfer to the actors involved, but also on **sharing the knowledge** that they already possess: ways of doing things, traditions and practices that contribute to the management and conservation of natural areas.

### 8.4. LIFE FOREST NETWORK

The project [LIFE RED BOSQUES](#) aims to establish knowledge and training networks for the effective management of Mediterranean forest habitats within the RN2000 network through:

- Visits
- Working group and forum
- Training programmes
- Dissemination of technical material and communication

All these projects aim to promote peer learning, participation and the ongoing assessment of the skills acquired.

### 8.5. School of Protected Areas

It is worth considering training programmes for those wishing to pursue a career in protected areas and their surrounding environments, as offered by the [School of Protected Areas](#) (run by the Fernando González Bernáldez Foundation). Thus, a programme aimed at entrepreneurs could be included as part of the training.



## 9. Resources, tools and guides for training

### 9.1. Resources and tools

#### Design:

- Participatory methods for collectively identifying problems and needs: murals, cards, Post-it notes and felt-tip pens. Online collaborative whiteboards. Activities designed to spark discussion (the 'thermometer' activity: positioning oneself in the room according to the degree of agreement with a statement).
- Participatory research: collective mapping, working groups, participatory action research, learning communities.

#### Building partnerships:

- Cross-sectoral workshops to promote teamwork and conflict resolution.  
Resources: [online shared whiteboard](#) posters, cards or sticky notes, felt-tip pens; team-building activities (games), role-play, forum theatre.

#### Communication:

- Social media management tools (such as [Hootsuite](#), [Buffer](#), [Metricool](#) or [Meta for Business](#)).
- Creation of standard templates for publications (using tools that facilitate online collaboration).
- Collaborative content development. For example, creating [collaborative FAQs](#).
- [Informative resources and materials](#) of the educational and informative LIFE INTEMARES project.
- [Brochures from the LIFE A-MAR project](#) explaining the value of the marine RN2000 Reserve

#### Participatory evaluation:

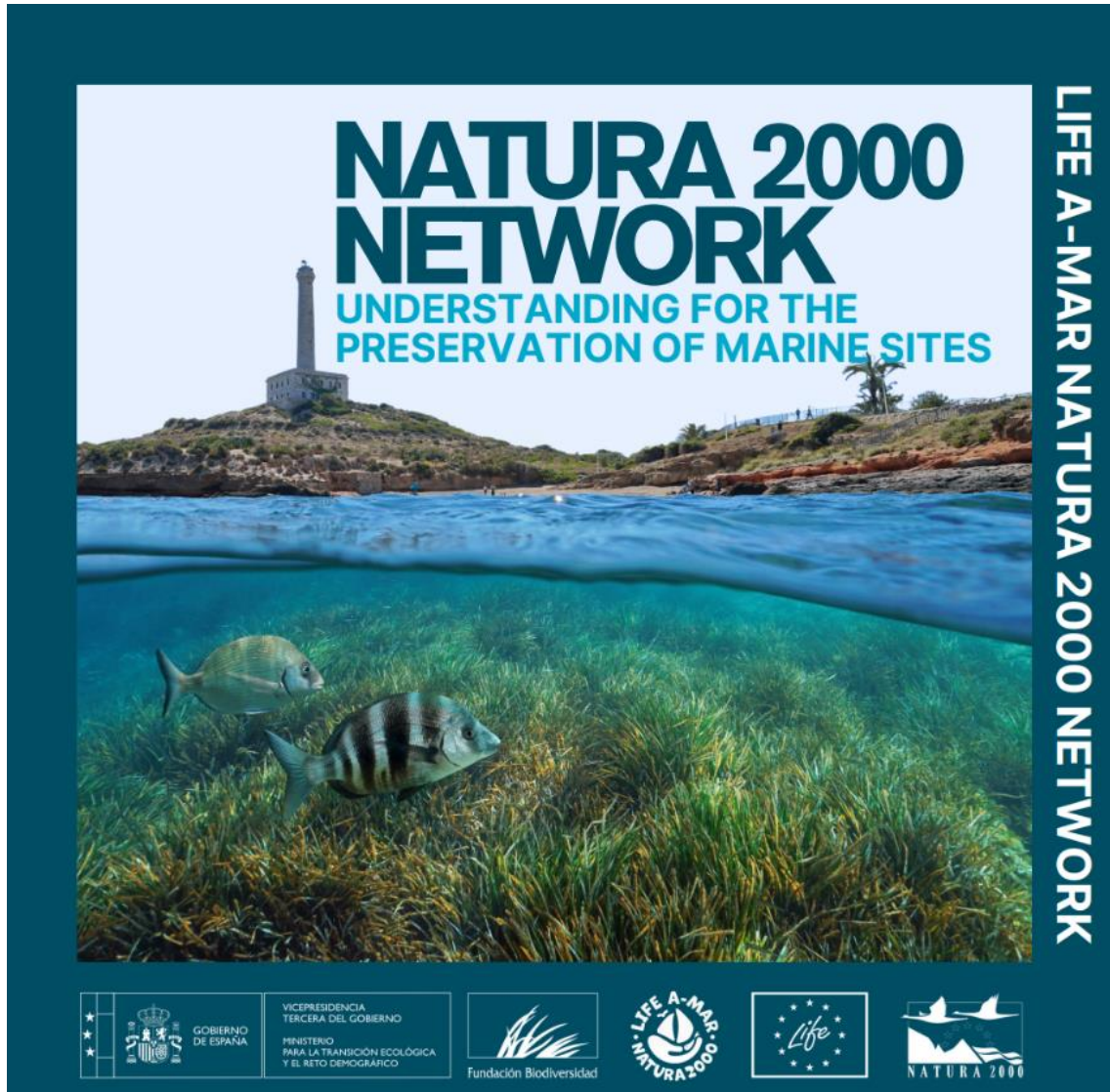
- [Word cloud](#).
- [Online collaborative whiteboard](#) of Canva
- Posters, cards or post-its, felt-tip pens.
- Activity: what I have learnt in the session and what I have left behind. Discuss in a group.
- [Evaluation guide provided by the European Commission](#): chapter on participatory evaluation

#### Digital tools and games:

- [Slido](#)
- [Mentimeter](#)
- [Kahoot](#)
- [Wooclap](#)
- [Classpoint](#)
- ["Serious games"](#).



# Brochures to communicate about Natura 2000 Network



**NATURA 2000 NETWORK**  
**BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES**  
 The protection of these marine sites provides multiple services that contribute to welfare.

<b>SUPPLY</b>	FOOD / FISHING 	SCIENTIFIC/MEDICAL RESOURCES 	RAW MATERIALS 	ORNAMENTAL RESOURCES 
<b>REGULATION</b>	WATER QUALITY 	BEACH MAINTENANCE 	OXYGEN LIBERATION 	MAINE PROCESSES REGULATION 
<b>SUPPORT</b>	LIFECYCLE CONSERVATION 	BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION 	BIOASS GENERATION 	TEMPERATURE AND SALINITY REGULATION 
<b>CULTURAL</b>	PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE 	TOURISM AND LEISURE 	LANDSCAPES / INSPIRATION 	CLIMATE REGULATION 

**COMPATIBLE HUMAN ACTIVITIES**

The spaces included in the Natura 2000 Network establish specific protection and management measures, to make sure that any human activities undertaken are compatible with a favourable conservation status for the natural heritage preservation.

With that goal, management plans are developed for these protected areas, including detailed guidelines to guarantee that human activities do not compromise the integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity.



## 9.2. Useful guides for implementing recommendations

### Group facilitation:

- [Guide to Participatory Processes under the LIFE INTEMARES Governance Strategy](#)
- [Running workshops: a practical guide for WWF trainers](#)
- [A practical guide to promoting public participation](#) of the Government of Navarre
- [Deciding together for better management. Handbook on participatory planning in protected areas](#) of the Basque Government

### Communication:

- [Communication Toolkit](#) for LIFE Efficient Manager for Efficient Natura 2000

### Collective knowledge:

- [How to carry out a participatory mapping exercise \(INTEF's 'Adventure of Learning' guide\).](#)
- [How to create learning communities \(INTEF's 'The Adventure of Learning' guide\).](#)
- [How to create collaborative FAQs \(INTEF's 'Adventure of Learning' guide\)](#)
- [How to carry out participatory action research \(INTEF's 'The Adventure of Learning' guide\)](#)

### Citizen science:

- [How to get involved in citizen science \('The Adventure of Learning' guide\).](#)
- [A brief guide to citizen science from the CSIC.](#)
- [Citizen science infographic.](#)

### Conflict resolution:

- [How to run a forum theatre \(a guide from INTEF's 'Adventure of Learning'\)](#)
- [Conflict Management and Resolution Handbook](#)

### Participatory evaluation:

- [Tools for participatory evaluation](#)
- [12 guides and tools](#) for evaluating social projects and public policies
- [Practical guide](#) for the evaluation of participatory processes



## 10. Conclusions

Capacity Building in the marine Natura 2000 network is an essential tool for moving towards a more effective, participatory and sustainable conservation model. The experience gained within the framework of LIFE-A-MAR shows that well-designed and tailored training can make a decisive contribution to improving the management of marine protected areas, strengthening the involvement of sea-using sectors and promoting a more aware and committed citizenry.

The SWOT analysis carried out has identified both the factors that have contributed to the programme's success—such as the active methodology, institutional cooperation and the technical expertise of the training teams—and those that require continuous improvement, including the need to clarify contractual objectives, improve logistical planning, better tailor the content to different profiles, and strengthen evaluation and monitoring processes. These findings provide a solid basis for guiding future training initiatives.

Several key recommendations stand out from the lessons learnt:

- **To design training programmes tailored to the specific context and target audiences**, adapting content, methodologies and formats to their circumstances, motivations and levels of knowledge.
- **To promote participatory approaches and practical experiences** that encourage active engagement with the learning process, the sharing of experiences and a direct connection with the marine environment.
- **To promote a long-term vision** through training programmes, mentoring, communities of practice and mechanisms to ensure continuity, thereby consolidating the skills acquired.
- **To foster strategic partnerships** between public authorities, the scientific community, maritime professionals, NGOs and other local stakeholders, thereby strengthening collaborative governance and shared responsibility.
- **To incorporate communication into training programmes**, using clear messages, accessible resources and digital tools to broaden the reach and improve public understanding of the Marine Natura 2000 Network.
- **To strengthen evaluation** by defining indicators that measure not only immediate learning outcomes, but also changes in professional practices, organisational models and environmental outcomes.

Taken together, these factors show that training is not limited to conveying technical knowledge: it also drives cultural change, strengthens the social networks, creates sustainable economic opportunities and contributes to more effective management of marine protected areas. Experience has shown that when science, participation, methodological innovation and cooperation between stakeholders are combined, this leads to meaningful learning and real change in the local area.

Looking ahead, the consolidation of these processes—as well as their replication in new areas and sectors—will be key to ensuring that the Marine Natura 2000 Network realises its full potential as a tool for conservation and sustainable development. Training will remain a cornerstone of this effort.



## 11. Bibliography

### WEBS

- European Commission (2019). *Attitudes of Europeans towards Biodiversity*  
<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2194>
- [Natura 2000 Barometer | Maps and charts | European Environment Agency \(EEA\)](#)
- LIFE IP INTEMARES project website <https://intemares.es/>
- Capacity Building Strategy for the LIFE IP INTEMARES project [executive\\_summary\\_a9\\_0.pdf](#)
- [Elaboración de la Estrategia de Capacitación para gestores y usuarios de los espacios marinos de la Red Natura 2000 – Intemares](#)
- Triton Research (2024) LIFE A MAR NATURA 2000 <https://lifeamarnatura2000.eu/es/>
- Europarc. Be a Better Communicator: Tools and Tips to help Natura 2000 Managers.  
<https://www.europarc.org/library/project-archive/communication-skills/toolkit/>
- [Training for managers and other users of the Marine Natura 2000 Network – Fundación Biodiversidad](#) Links on the FB website to resources from the Marine Natura 2000 Network Training Plan

### ARTICLES

- CEE web for Biodiversity (2019). Where Natura 2000 went wrong? Synthesis paper, p. 3-10
- Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge and Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (2020). Implementation Manual for the Sustainability Recognition Scheme for Nature Tourism in the Natura 2000 Network, pp. 4–55
- Porzecanski AL, Sterling EJ, Copsey JA, et al. (2022). A systems framework for planning and evaluating capacity development in conservation: recommendations for practitioners. *Oryx*. 2022;56(5):671-680. doi:10.1017/S003060532100154X
- International Union for Conservation of Nature and World Commission on Protected Areas (2015). Strategic Framework for Capacity Building in Protected Areas and Other Conserved Lands 2015–2025, pp. 3–33
- Candelo, C., Ortiz, G. A. and Unger, B. (2003). RUN WORKSHOPS. A practical guide for trainers. WWF Colombia (World Wide Fund for Nature), WWF Colombia (World Wide Fund for Nature), InWEnt (formerly DSE • Germany) and IFOK (Institute for Communication in Organisations • Germany), Colombia,  
[https://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/hacer\\_talleres\\_guia\\_para\\_capitadores\\_wwf.pdf](https://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/hacer_talleres_guia_para_capitadores_wwf.pdf)
- European Commission (2025). Evaluation Handbook. In:  
<https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/system/files/documents/2025-07/Evaluation%20Handbook%20-%202025%20Edition%20-%20July%2028%202025.pdf>

### LINKS TO TRAINING RESOURCES

- Please refer to the links to training guides and resources in the [relevant section](#).



## 12. Annexes

### Annex I- Annex I – Training Strategy Action Plan Programmes.

Source: [Training Strategy](#).

Thematic blocks	Programs
<b>Governance</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training program to increase participation and improve coordination and achieve better governance of the marine Natura 2000 Network</li> <li>2. Training program in mediation and conflict resolution for environmental, economic and social sustainability in the marine Natura 2000 network</li> <li>3. Training program in the marine Natura 2000 Network regulations and their application, integrating the principle of governance</li> <li>4. Training program in marine custody and co-management</li> <li>5. Training program in public affairs and government relations</li> </ol>
<b>Applied Management</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Experience exchange program in the management of the marine Natura 2000 Network</li> <li>7. Specific training program in effective management of the marine Natura 2000 Network</li> <li>8. Program to integrate research in the marine Natura 2000 Network management</li> <li>9. Training program in impact mitigation measures</li> <li>10. Training program in project formulation and resource acquisition</li> <li>11. Training program in ecological restoration of the marine Nature 2000 Network</li> <li>12. Training program in new technologies for the management of the marine Natura 2000 networks</li> </ol>
<b>Education &amp; Awareness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Training program in the marine Natura 2000 Network integrated into formal and informal education</li> <li>14. Training program for guides and interpreters of the marine Natura 2000 Network</li> <li>15. Training program in citizen science</li> </ol>
<b>Communication</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Marine Natura 2000 Network Communication training program</li> <li>17. Brand management for the marine Natura 2000 Network training program</li> <li>18. Training program in information management and divulgation</li> </ol>
<b>Transversal skill</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Training program in mixed/cross-cutting skills in the marine Natura 2000 Network</li> </ol>
<b>Marine Natura 2000 Network foundations &amp; Entrepreneurship</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20. Training program in the foundations of the marine Natura 2000 Network</li> <li>21. Training program in entrepreneurship in the marine Natura 2000 Network</li> </ol>



## Annex II. SWOT Analysis Tables

This annex systematises the results of the SWOT analysis carried out within the framework of the training programme, with the aim of strengthening decision-making and continuous improvement. A distinction is made between **internal factors (Strengths and Weaknesses)**, linked to the programme's own capacities, resources and processes — on which it is possible to act directly — and **external factors (Opportunities and Threats)**, associated with the institutional, sectoral and social environment in which it operates.

Although the latter are largely beyond the organisation's control, identifying them early on, makes it possible to anticipate scenarios, adjust planning and design adaptation strategies that increase the effectiveness, sustainability and impact of future training activities.

### WEAKNESSES (internal factors)

Weakness (internal)	Operational recommendation	Where to integrate it	Who should take action
<b>Ambiguous purpose and scope of the plan/contract</b>	Define the objective and scope in phases; clear criteria and deliverables.	Object of the contract; Description of work; Terms of Reference	Contracting authority
<b>Slow administrative processes that compress the implementation schedule</b>	Plan with allowances; schedule validations; deadline adjustment clauses.	Execution period; Conditions of implementation	Contracting authority
<b>Absence of contingency plans</b>	Include risk matrix and Plan B for key activities.	Methodology; Risk management; Logistics plan	Contracting authority / Technical Assistance (TA)
<b>Poorly managed dependence on third parties</b>	Identify critical dependencies and prior agreements; agreed alternatives.	Coordination; Prerequisites; Methodology	Contracting authority / TA
<b>Unpractical/non-participatory methodology and poor adaptation to the audience</b>	Establish active methodological minimums; prior analysis of recipients to adapt methodological approach and messages, promote contextualised + meaningful learning.	Teaching guide; Training design; Target audience	TA / Teaching team
<b>Diffuse roles and governance (authority-TA)</b>	Define organisational structure, channels, committees, and points of contact.	Organisation and coordination; Conditions of implementation	Contracting authority
<b>Insufficient equipment sizing (TA)</b>	Link equipment provision to number of participants and formats.	Technical proposal; Technical competence and working methodology	AT / Bidders



<b>Underestimation of design/preparation time</b>	Establish design and pilot testing phases prior to implementation.	Timeline; Previous milestones	Contracting authority / TA
<b>Overload due to unexpected requirements</b>	Plan for budget/time reserves and change procedures.	Conditions of implementation; Change management	Contracting authority
<b>Mismatch between solvency and contract complexity</b>	Align technical/economic solvency with actual complexity.	Solvency criteria	Contracting authority
<b>Poor inter-institutional communication and coordination</b>	Communication plan and coordination schedule with minutes.	Communication plan; Organisation and coordination	Contracting authority
<b>Limitations in the evaluation and impact system</b>	Define indicators and post-training follow-up (90/180 days).	Evaluation system; Performance indicators	Contracting authority / TA

### STRENGTHS (internal factors)

<b>Fortitude (inner)</b>	<b>How to consolidate it</b>	<b>Where to integrate it</b>
<b>Continuous and close monitoring of contracts</b>	Hold follow-up meetings and review KPIs; lessons learned per edition.	Contract governance; Monitoring and closure
<b>Consolidated TA team – contracting body (+trust, +effectiveness)</b>	Formalise roles, responsibilities and coordination protocols.	Governance; ToR
<b>Collaboration and institutional support (legitimacy and scope)</b>	Establish agreements and/or collaboration agreements between institutions (e.g. Ministry of Education).	Contract governance, inter-institutional collaboration;
<b>Quality of teaching staff (credibility, up-to-date knowledge)</b>	Require profiles with experience and skills in group facilitation and teaching techniques (not just technical skills).	Technical solvency criteria for teams;
<b>Active and experiential methodologies adapted</b>	Define minimum methodological requirements and requirements for adaptation to audiences.	Training proposal with active teaching methodologies
<b>Use of digital tools with greater reach</b>	Standardise accessible platforms and reusable repositories.	Technical resources; (Contract products)

### THREATS (external factors)

Threat (external)	What to consider / How to mitigate	Who can mitigate it
<b>Regulatory changes / obsolescence of content</b>	Design flexible and revisable content; periodic review	Body / TA
<b>Lack of continuity/dependence on funding</b>	Plan multi-year itineraries and diversify sources.	Contracting authority
<b>Institutional/territorial sensitivity</b>	Coordinate messages with local managers and autonomous communities;	Contracting authority
<b>Adverse weather conditions</b>	Flexible timetables and alternative formats for practical sessions.	TA
<b>Low participation or motivation among students</b>	Strategy for recruiting and securing prior commitment; calendar adjustments according to the seasonality of certain sectors	Authority / TA
<b>Institutional intermediation that hinders control</b>	Clear agreements on dissemination, monitoring and data.	Contracting authority

### OPPORTUNITIES (external factors)

Opportunity (external)	How to make the most of it	Where to incorporate it
<b>Stable contact networks</b>	Create communities of practice and multisectoral round tables > +Scope	Design; Governance; Communication
<b>Credits/official recognition for students</b>	Coordinate with participating entities from the design stage onwards to accredit training > +motivation	Planning; ToR
<b>Growing interest in sustainability</b>	A practical approach with added value for key sectors.	Training design; Communication
<b>Ongoing training programmes</b>	Design itineraries and editions with annual updates.	Terms of Reference; Planning
<b>Continuous and systematic assessment</b>	Integrate institutional learning and continuous improvement.	Assessment system
<b>Diversification of audiences and formats</b>	Adapt methodologies and channels; expand reach.	Training design; Dissemination
<b>Strategic communication and dissemination</b>	Communication and brand image plan for the programme.	Communication; Implementation