

RECONNECT

INTERREG V-B “Balkan-Mediterranean 2014-2020”

Regional cooperation for the transnational ecosystem sustainable development

Presenting the RECONNECT research project

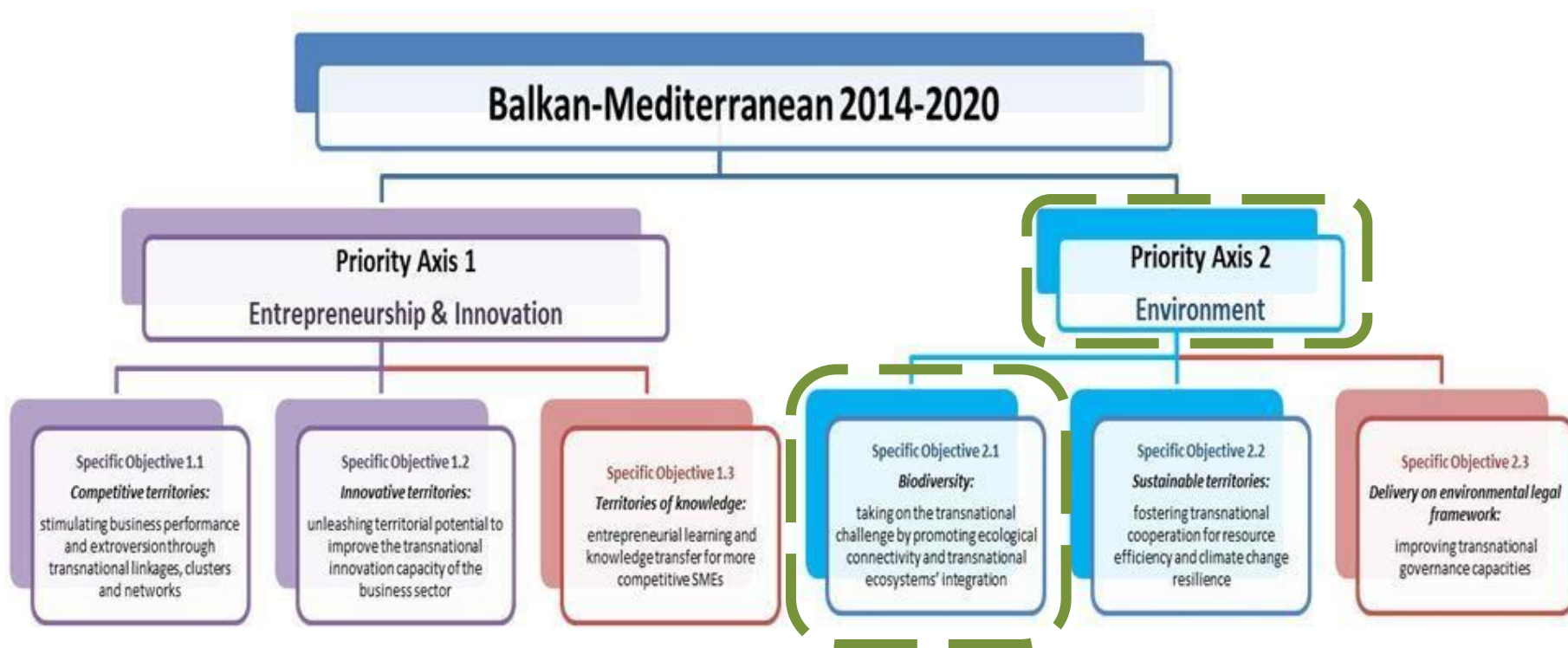
**Open Day Event/Cavo Greco Environmental Centre, Cavo Greco, Cyprus,
27/03/2019**

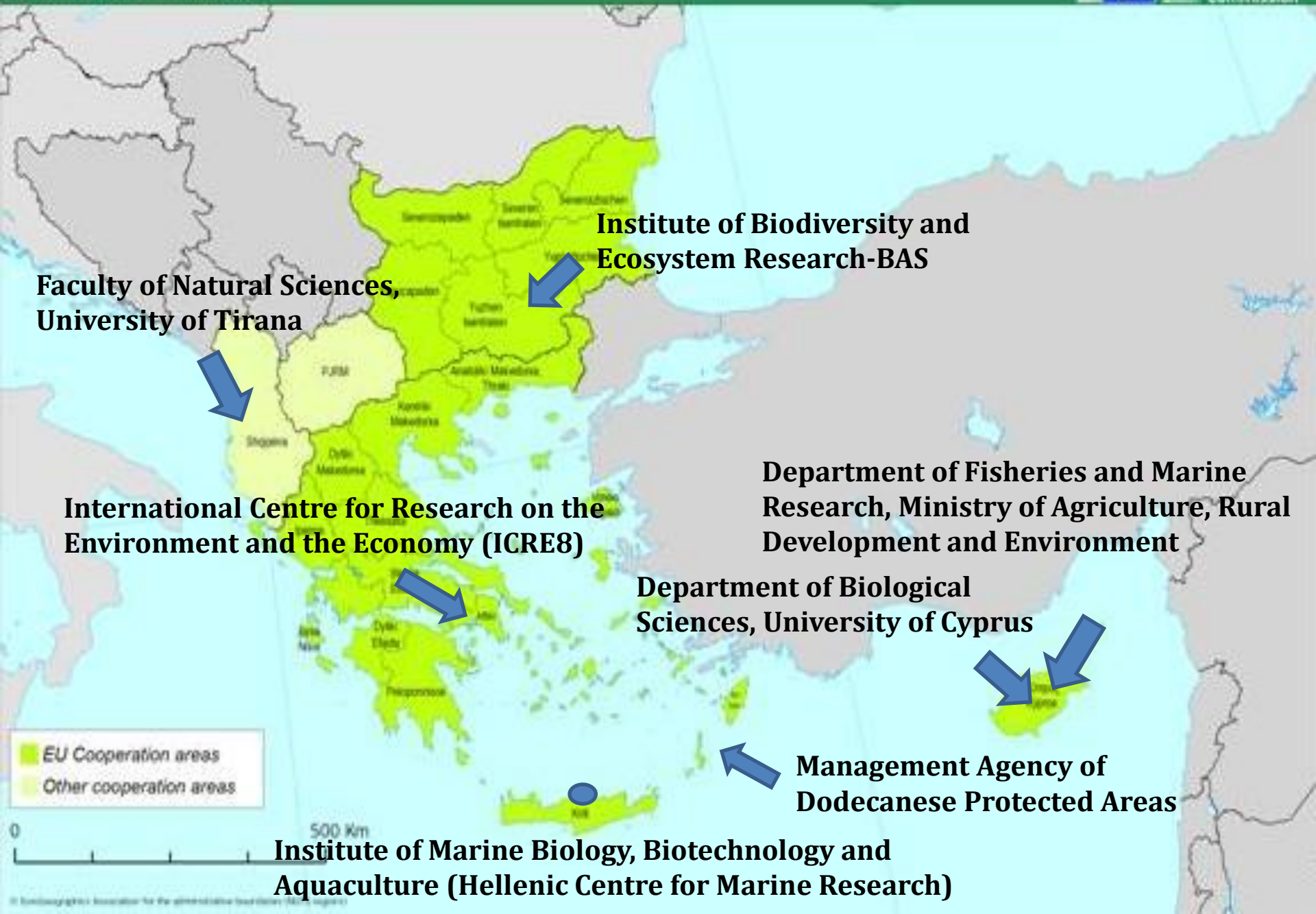
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Priority Axis 2: “Environment”





Observer Partners



**Mediterranean Institute of marine and
terrestrial Biodiversity and Ecology**

**Department of Biological and Environmental
Sciences and Technologies, University of Salento**

Background of the project

- Main challenge: to develop shared practices for the sustainable management of the MPAs and Natura 2000 sites against the most significant pressures and threats these ecosystems face.
- Novel approach: the establishment and harmonisation of a joint regional strategy for the conservation of these ecosystems, under the EU legislation framework.
- RECONNECT aims to create a transnational cooperative network between the vulnerable ecosystems of MPAs and Natura sites of Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Albania.
- A common management strategy will be developed based on the combination of ecological, genetic and socio-economic aspects under the umbrella of a common Decision Support System.
- The approaches developed will comply with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Europe 2020 Strategy (EU2020).

Objectives of the project

- Overall objective: To confront common ecosystem threats and to improve the capacity of local management authorities by promoting efficient management of natural resources through a transnational approach.
- Specific objectives:
 1. Identify and map the key marine habitats and evaluate the services they provide by socio-economic and cultural approaches
 2. Enrich the current management toolbox with instruments based on the genetic and functional biodiversity
 3. Engage citizens in environmental monitoring and conservation activities and involve stakeholders to boost potential for blue growth and job creation
 4. Develop a platform for data storage and analysis of results based on cutting edge information technologies
 5. Establishment of a Decision Support System to enhance the MPAs and Natura sites management on a scientific basis.

Expected outputs of the project

- Main outputs are directly linked to the Specific Objective (S.O.) 2.1:
Interactive maps, integrating essential biodiversity, socio-economic and cultural variables (D3.x.3), along with the assessment of the functional and genetic diversity (D4.x.1, D4.x.2).
- Best-practice-protocols (D5.x.1) will be created for the monitoring of the MPAs and Natura 2000 sites using citizens' activities.
- Citizen-generated data will be hosted in a web-based platform and a mobile/tablet application which will facilitate the dissemination and outreach of the project's outputs.

Expected outputs of the project

- The proposed activities aim to attract more citizens in sites of cultural and natural heritage resulting in an increase of the expected number of visits.
- The project will develop a Decision Support System (DSS) (D6.x.1) for the sustainable management of MPAs and Natura 2000 sites based on a suite of approaches. This system will be applied to the vulnerable and valuable habitats in the Balkan-Mediterranean area in order to promote ecological connectivity.
- The Handbook of management practices (D6.x.2) will support the authorities to sustainably manage areas of special interest, based on internationally gained experience, standards and tools.
- A transnational integrated approach between different countries of the Balkan-Mediterranean area will offer an ecosystem management strategy combining the environmental quality with the regional economic development.

Expected results of the project

- Formation of a transnational cooperation network of stakeholders (professionals working in environmental legislation, local and regional authorities, NGOs, public institutions, businesses and civil society organisations) for knowledge transfer on environmental protection and management issues.
- Enhancement of public awareness on ecological conservation through the organisation of a jointly designed pilot project (D5.x.1, D5.x.2, D5.x.3) and open days activities (D2.x.2), is an important result which will stimulate education on environmental policy and develop environmental friendly behaviours.
- The aforementioned results will be applied in the chosen study sites of the project, and eventually in other MPAs and Natura 2000 sites of the Balkan Mediterranean area. Thus, they are strongly linked to the specified programme result indicator (R0604) as they expand the ecological connectivity of the Balkan Mediterranean special interest sites.

Work Packages

- WP1. Project Management & Coordination
- WP2. Communication, Dissemination and Outreach
- WP3. Mapping and evaluating of Marine Protected Area habitats
- WP4. Enriching management toolbox with ecosystem connectivity based instruments
- WP5. Citizen Science initiative: Involving people in ecosystems restoration
- WP6. Decision Support System (DSS) for the ecosystem management and sustainable development
- Budget: Overall budget: 1.227.576,70 €; Period: 24 months (15/09/2017 - 14/09/2019)

Location of activities

Greece: regional marine park of northern Karpathos (Diafani, Steno, Saria, Astakidonisia, Tristomo) (GR4210003)



Marine habitat types:

1) *Posidonia* beds, 2) Shallow bays (soft bottom) and 3) Reefs.

Location of activities

Cyprus: Kavo Gkreko (CY3000005)

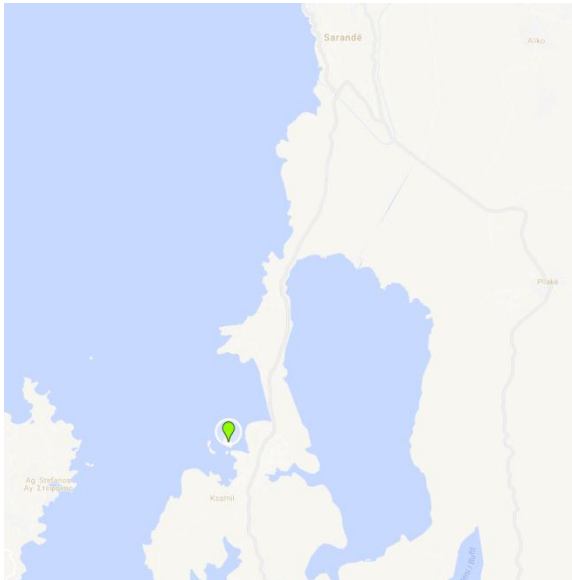


Marine habitat types:

1) *Posidonia* beds, 2) Shallow bays (soft bottom), 3) Reefs and 4) Sandbanks.

Location of activities

Albania: Ksamil Bay and islands



Marine habitat types:
1) *Posidonia* beds.

Location of activities

Bulgaria: Gradina-Zlatna Ribka (BG0000146)



Marine habitat types:
1) Reefs and 2)
Sandbanks.

- Project's website: <http://reconnect.hcmr.gr/>
- Social network tools:
 - Twitter: [@RECONNECT_BMP](#)
 - Facebook: [BalkanMedReconnect](#)
 - Linkedin: [balkanmed-reconnect](#)
- Project's e-mail account: reconnect@hcmr.gr



Thank you for your attention

Any questions??