

EUSAIR Action Plan revision

Thematic consultation questionnaire for Pillar 3 TSG (gathered answers from: Croatia- gathered from comments on initial paper, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia)

Thematic consultation questionnaire was developed by the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner in cooperation with external experts as a starting point for thematic consultation on EUSAIR Action Plan revision in TSGs and with relevant policy owners in the EUSAIR countries. It was intended to be used with the Initial policy paper for thematic consultation and to collect feedback from country policy owners.

The overall process and context in which these documents are used is described in the Background document with Roadmap on the EUSAIR Action Plan revision v5, approved through Governing Board Written Procedure in December 2022.

The questionnaire was addressed to environment governance structures. TSG members gathered all relevant inputs from their country in the period from November 2022 till 30 January 2023 so that only one questionnaire was submitted from one country. As described in the Background document each country has had the national consultation organised differently, involving different sectors and governance levels.

Pillar Coordinators have forwarded all received questionnaires to the Facility Point Lead Partner that merged information from all countries in one document. No consolidation was made at this point yet. In cooperation with Pillar thematic experts proposals for Pillar/Topic reformulations/additions were gathered by the Facility Point Lead Partner and will be presented to the Revision Working Group.

The Pillar Coordinators, Pillar thematic experts supported by Facility point LP with external experts will organise the gathered information and prepare proposals to be discussed at the next TSG meeting planned for March/April. At the TSG meeting agreements on contents of most Action Plan chapters (e.g. objectives, challenges, policies, key stakeholders, actions, indicators, targets) will be sought, using the received inputs as the basis. This will be a moderated discussion. After the meeting results will be written down, sent first to Pillar Coordinators and then to TSG members. After fine-tuning they will be included

in the first draft of the Action Plan for further commenting from the strategic level (National Coordinators, EC...) and for another round of public consultation. The consolidation process will therefore happen entirely in the TSG.

1. Topic 1: The marine environment

1.1 Challenges

1.1.1 Please prioritise the challenges/opportunities provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how relevant they are as regards the added value of being tackled by EUSAIR. **(1 being the most important, other follow in the numerical order).**

In the Adriatic Ionian Region it is noted:

Some countries ranked challenges/opportunities by how much are they relevant, some only marked them.	Only ranked	1 (most important)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (least important)
Climate Change adaptation, with the Mediterranean identified as a hotspot by the IPCC	1x (SLO)	1x (GR)	1x (MN)	1x (NM)	1x (IT)						
There is a lack of habitat maps covering the Adriatic and Ionian Seas.	1x (SLO)		1x (NM)							1x (GR)	2x (IT, MN)
Overfishing, habitat degradation and incidental catches pose serious threats to marine biodiversity. Monitoring and enforcement are insufficient.	1x (SLO)	1x (MN)	1x (GR)	1x (IT)		1x (NM)					

Pripombe dodal [IT1]: There are many habitat maps. Maybe there is the need to widen the coverage and/or improve them

Pripombe dodal [IT2]: The proposed challenges are at very different scale/scope: the EUSAIR AP should focus only on the macroregional/sea basin scale. There is also a not clear distinction between challenges and actions.

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<i>Aquaculture is a rapidly growing industry which is not regulated in all countries so as to ensure sustainability.</i>	1x (SLO)						2x (NM,GR)		1x (MN)	1x (IT)	
<i>Uncontrolled and illegal coastal development often leads to destruction of habitats, and to the loss of the natural capacity of coastal territories to adapt to changes (resilience).</i>	1x (SLO)	1x (NM)		1x (MN)		1x (IT)			1x (GR)		
<i>Increasing number of invasive alien species from aquaculture and ballast water discharge threaten ecosystem functions.</i>	1x (SLO)		1x (IT)			1x (GR)				1x (MN)	1x (NM)
<i>Coverage in terms of offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) beyond 12 nautical miles is the lowest of all EU marine regions, while existing MPAs are often not adequately managed.</i>	1x (SLO)						1x (MN)	1x (NM)	1x (IT)		1x (GR)
<i>Intense maritime transport activities and hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation result in oil spills, including large scale pollution events, and noise pollution.</i>	1x (SLO)	1x (IT)						2x (GR,MN)		1x (NM)	
<i>Insufficient waste water treatment in several participant countries leads to pollution from rivers, exacerbated by use of nitrates on agricultural lands. Pollution is also caused by ecologically-unsound aquaculture practices and excessive use of chemical and pharmaceutical products.</i>	1x (SLO)			1x (GR)	2x (NM,MN)			1x (IT)			
<i>Marine litter stemming both from land-based sources, lost and discarded fishing gear and recreational activities poses a serious problem.</i>	1x (SLO)				1x (GR)	1x (MN)	1x (IT)		1x (NM)		
<i>Microplastic pollution in seawater threatens human health with unknown impacts</i>											

Pripombe dodal [IT3]: The excess of urbanization also causes the loss of the natural capacity of coastal ecosystems to adapt to changes (i.e. their natural **resilience**).

<i>The recent trends for offshore wind turbines and solar farms (floating or fixed) will present a new challenge in terms of spatial planning and the marine environment.</i>											
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1.1.2 Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the challenges provided in the initial policy paper with regard to your country’s involvement in Pillar 3/Topic 1 of EUSAIR?

ITALY:

It has been very difficult to prioritise the proposed challenges because they relate to different but equally important processes that insist and have impacts at very different scales/scopes: they should be rephrased in terms of what can be done or is significant to do at sea basin and/or macro-regional level. Proposal to rephrase the first challenge in: “The Mediterranean is identified as a hotspot by the IPCC but measures/interventions to adapt to climate change are insufficient”.

Proposal to rephrase the 5th challenge in “Uncontrolled and illegal coastal development often leads to destruction of habitats and to the loss of the natural capacity of coastal territories to adapt to changes (resilience)”.

GREECE: lack of habitat mapping covering the Adriatic and Ionian seas in relation to the placement of new uses in the sea as new offshore RES, consequences – responses

SLOVENIA: We suggest to add new topics to the Action plan for TSG3: Circular Economy, Ballast water management and other releases in the sea and environment in general.

1.1.3 Is there another challenge concerning the thematic field of *Topic 1: The marine environment*, for which you see an added value of being addressed at EUSAIR level? The challenge should be specific to the EUSAIR territory and scope.

MONTENEGRO: Data exchange and insufficient transboundary cooperation. Insufficient promotion and communication about marine environment protection challenges and contribution of EUSAIR to the general public. Insufficient integration between marine conservation and marine spatial planning processes.

ITALY:

- **Circular economy** could be included among the challenges to be addressed in the next decades, for example linked to marine litter life cycle.
- sustainable management of natural resources (Air, Water and Soil).
- topic of renewable energy farms at sea, for example in terms of evaluating the opportunities and potential impacts. Pillar 3 could foresee actions to enhance a better understanding on which typologies of renewable energies are the most suitable for the AIR and on the best allocation possible for the plants (i.e. through MSP analysis).
- climate change related risks. Sea level rise, increase in storm surges that generate hydrogeological instability, coastal erosion and put coastal safety at risk. The saline intrusion combined with subsidence threat agri-food production and drinking water sources at risk. Water scarcity and droughts might also impact the quality of surface water bodies (rivers, lakes, transitional, coastal marine) and groundwater bodies.
- In order to deeply address challenges related to marine litter, there is the need to improve marine litter monitoring, including litter deriving from riverine fluxes in the area

GREECE: Environmental protection in marine and coastal waters and benefits for marine and coastal landscapes

CROATIA:

- To establish agreed/address criteria for the evaluation of the initial state of GES and further monitoring
- To transfer knowledge and experience in EBA approach to MSP (having in mind that some of the countries are member states (HR, SLO, IT, GR), while some of them are contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention (HR, SLO, IT, GR, MNE, BIH, ALB)
- To enhance the model of transboundary cooperation between the countries of AIR in the field of marine area protection
- There is a proposal in Sub-topic 1.1, Action 1.1.1. to communicate the EU portal European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet)

Main measures to recover biodiversity will be:

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- non-deterioration in the conservation status and trends of all protected habitats and species, and ensuring that at least 30% of habitats and species not currently in favourable status are in that category or show a strong positive trend.
- 30% / 10% protected area targets
- Restoration targets
- Improving the state of ecosystems and their function and services

CBD global biodiversity framework (15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

dates: 7-19 December 2022

location: Montreal, Quebec, Canada

main outcome will be Global Biodiversity Framework

- Overcoming Climate Change challenges - In line with the UNOC political declaration to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Developing and implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and avert, minimize and address loss and damage, reducing disaster risk and enhancing resilience, including through increasing the use of renewable energy technologies, especially oceanbased technologies, reducing the risk of and preparing for ocean-related extreme weather events, including the development of multi-hazard early warning systems and integrating ecosystems-based approaches for disaster risk reduction at all levels and across all phases of disaster risk reduction and management, and the impacts of sea level rise, reducing emissions from maritime transportation, including shipping, and implementing nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches for, inter alia, carbon sequestration and the prevention of coastal erosion
- Overcoming marine litter challenges - In line with the UNOC political declaration to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Preventing, reducing, and eliminating marine plastic litter, including single-use plastics and microplastics, including through contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches, encouraging resource efficiency and recycling as well as environmentally sound waste management, ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, developing viable alternatives for consumer and industrial uses, taking into account the full environmental impacts, innovation in product design and environmentally sound remediation of marine plastic litter that is already in marine environments, and recognizing the establishment by UNEA 5.2 of an intergovernmental negotiating committee towards an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

SLOVENIA:

There is AN increasing challenge in Climate Change adaptation as the Mediterranean area is identified as a hotspot by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and waste and water treatment, especially due to the excessive use of chemical and pharmaceutical products.

1.2 Objectives

The **objectives** of the 2014 Action Plan were updated in the initial policy paper:

- To ensure a good environmental and ecological status of the marine and coastal environment in line with post-2020 biodiversity targets [of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), the relevant EU acquis, the ecosystem approach [roadmap](#) of the Barcelona [Convention](#) and looking towards the 2030 targets in line with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015).
- To address threats to marine biodiversity and contribute to the aim of EU Biodiversity Strategy that Europe's biodiversity will be on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, the planet, the climate and [economy](#), in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- To improve solid and water waste management to reduce waste flows to the sea and nutrient flows and other pollutants to the rivers and the sea.

1.2.1 Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the above objectives?

MONTENEGRO: Although post-2020 biodiversity targets have been mentioned, it would be necessary to underline specifically the need to reach the 30x30 target. That is part of both CBD but also Barcelona Convention.

GREECE: Ensuring Environmental Protection in marine and marine part of coast's areas designated as multiuse areas, MU, in the context of planning and implementation of the MSP.

ITALY: To be aligned with the relevant wording proposed in the Italian amendments to the policy paper

Pripombe dodal [IT4]: Official name of the post 2020 GBF

Pripombe dodal [MP5]: Added by Italy

Pripombe dodal [IT6]: Ecosystem approach is not related just to Barcelona Convention. In order to maintain the reference to Barcelona Convention it would be better to refer to its roadmap.

Pripombe dodal [IT7]: The official wording is "benefit of people, climate and the planet"

Italy suggests to rephrase “To improve solid and water waste management and decrease the use of fertilizers and pesticides with technological innovation and agriculture 4.0, in order to prevent and reduce waste flows and nutrient and other pollutants flows to the rivers and the sea.”

1.2.2 See proposed additional challenges under point 1.1.3. Additional objectives can be added accordingly.

NORTH MACEDONIA: To improve solid and water waste management to reduce waste flows, nutrient flows and other pollutants to the rivers and the sea.

ITALY:

- To improve solid and water waste management and decrease the use of fertilizers and pesticides with technological innovation and agriculture 4.0, in order to prevent and reduce waste flows and nutrient and other pollutants flows to the rivers and the sea.
- To Improve knowledge and understanding of land-sea interactions (as defined in the MSP Framework Directive)
- To tackle the cross-border and transnational aspects of MSP and ICZM;
- Transfer of best practices developed by implementing relevant EU Directives to non-member States
- To capitalize on the outputs and results of 2014-2020 EU-funded projects, especially ADRION
- To join efforts in the analysis of climate change related risks and in the adaptation measures

SLOVENIA:

The EUSAIR region should contribute to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – a long-term plan for protecting nature and reversing the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 with benefits for people, the climate and the planet. This goal is also in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Hence, the maritime and coastal biodiversity should be addressed with the following objectives:

- Technical measures for flood safety of the coast and coastal cities;
- Planning green infrastructure in public investments and including these plans in investment documentation;
- Preservation of coastal habitats

1.3 Key stakeholders

1.3.1 Which are the most relevant national/regional (e.g. national/regional institutions, agencies, others) and international (e.g. networks, associations, organisations, partnerships) key international stakeholders (indicative list) to be involved in order to reach most efficiently the objectives of the Topic 1. (objectives provided in point 1.2.1 and additional ones derived from challenges added under point 1.1.3, if relevant)? Indicative international key stakeholders are already listed in the initial policy paper.

MONTENEGRO: PAP RAC, SPA RAC – in addition to UNEP/MAP, marine research institutions, environmental protection agencies, MPA manager and most significant national NGOs

NORTH MACEDONIA: UNDP, GIZ, SDC

ITALY:

- Regional and National Environmental Protection Agencies
- Universities and other Research and Scientific Institutions
- Regional and local authorities
- Authorities in charge of Protected Areas Management (local, regional, sub-regional level)
- Environmental and agricultural associations
- MEAS (Multilateral Environmental Agreements)
- NGOs active in the field of environmental protection
- Regional Sea Conventions
- Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

1.4 Relevant policies

Pripombe dodal [IT8]: Referring to specific stakeholders could be non exhaustive. Therefore, it is more appropriate to include categories of stakeholders.

1.4.1 The following Framework, regulations, directives, initiatives etc. were identified as relevant for the **Topic 1: The marine environment**. Please also think about the funding opportunities related to these policies. Which are the most relevant?
 (Please tick the boxes before the selected policies)

Pripombe dodal [IT9]: Revise the policy framework by grouping the reference documents in homogeneous categories (Directives, Regulations, Action Plans, Strategies...)

Countries ranked which policies, regulations, directives, initiatives are relevant for the Topic 1			
5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on invasive alien species (the IAS Regulation)
5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	Paris Agreement on Climate Change	4X (SLO,GR,NM,MN)	EU Regulation 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species
4X (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	The Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols adopted in the framework of the amendments	3X (SLO,GR,MN)	Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)
4X (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	The Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP)	4X (SLO,GR,NM,MN)	Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
3X (SLO,IT,MN)	EU Green Deal	4X (SLO,HR,IT,MN)	A Farm to Fork Strategy (COM/2020/381 final)
3X (SLO,NM,MN)	Green Agenda for the Western Balkans	5X (SLO,HR,GR,IT,MN)	EU Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)
5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	Directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for Maritime Spatial Planning Framework for Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC)	5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	Nitrates Directive (Council Directive 91/676/EEC)

Pripombe dodal [MP10]: Added by Italy

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	and Commission Decision on Good Environmental Status ((EU) 2017/849)		
4X (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	Maritime Spatial Planning (Directive 2014/89/EU)	5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC), its amendments and related Commission Decisions
5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 (COM(2020) 380 final)	5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) and its amendments by Commission Decisions
4X (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	Birds (Directive 2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directives (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)	4X (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	EU Action Plan: Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil (COM(2021) 400 final)
3X (SLO,NM,MN)	EU Strategy on Green Infrastructure	5X (SLO,GR,IT,NM,MN)	Directive on single use plastics (Directive (EU) 2019/904)

Pripombe dodal [MP11]: Corrected by Italy

1.4.2 Is there another policy, or initiative, to be mentioned?

MONTENEGRO: Post-2020 biodiversity framework, UN Resolution towards a treaty on Single-Use Plastics, Post-2020 Roadmap for the protection of Mediterranean MPAs

NORTH MACEDONIA:

- Development of Natural Capital Account
- Global biodiversity framework- post 2020
- CBD, Programme for protected areas
- Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on the quality of water intended for human consumption

ITALY:

- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and its Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

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- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals;
- Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Member States Recovery and Resilience plans, with reference to the environmental sustainability dimension;
- Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) legislation: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2002 concerning the Implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe (2002/413/CE);
- Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean, 4.2.2009; Directive on Port Reception Facilities (Directive EU 2019/883).
- Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species
- Directive on Port Reception Facilities (Directive (EU) 2019/883)
- European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN)

CROATIA:

- Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)
- Directive (EU) 2015/720 (Plastic Bags Directive)
- A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy {SWD(2018) 16 final}
- Capitalize on existing EU initiatives: 8th Environment Action Programme

1.5 Actions

There are **Actions** foreseen in the initial policy paper under two sub-topics:

Subtopic 1 Threat to coastal and marine biodiversity

Action 1.1.1 Coastal and marine biodiversity information network

Pripombe dodal [IT12]: F3 is relevant for all the actions proposed for subtopic 1.1, not only for action 1.1.4

Pripombe dodal [IT13]: What about the platforms created within 2014-2020 EU projects (especially ADRION)?

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- *The use of European Environment Information and Observation Network (and focal points) to gather macro-regional information relevant for the implementation of Actions under subtopic 1.1 and subtopic 1.2.*
- *The use of Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) to gather macro-regional information relevant for the implementation of Actions under subtopic 1.1 and subtopic 1.2.*

Action 1.1.2 Enhancing the network of marine protected areas

- *Support for designation of new areas in coordination with the processes of designation of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (UNEP MAP); of Fisheries Restricted Areas under the GFCM, by completing marine NATURA 2000 network and by designating further protected areas to form a coherent and representative network of MPAs according to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.*
- *Establishment of AIR marine protected areas network*
- *Cooperation and harmonisation of protected areas management planning*
- *Exchange of best practices among managing authorities of Marine protected areas*

Action 1.1.3 Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP

- *Support in drawing-up and implementation of coherent MSP/ICZM following the ecosystem approach, addressing land-sea interaction and adaptation to climate change as a tool to manage potential conflicts among various sectoral policies (preparation of guidelines on the application of ecosystem approach in transnationally coherent MSP for AIR, capacity building activities)*
- *Evaluation of implementation of ICZM and MSP on macro-regional level (application of ecosystem-based approach, identification of needs for better transboundary coherence, identification of areas needing transboundary harmonisation...)*
- *Share experiences in guiding sectoral development to minimize economic losses and the weakening of ecosystem services*
- [Capitalization of EU funded projects 2014-2020* and exchange of best practice](#)
- [Exchange of best practice](#)

Action 1.1.4 Cooperation in management of marine protected species

- *Measures for monitoring and management of marine protected species*
- *Identification of hot spot marine biogenic formations that are excluded from Marine protected areas or are not adequately managed*
- *Improve data collection and sharing*
- *Evaluating the status of the selected marine protected species due to risks related to pollutants (e.g. marine litter, microplastics) and climate change*
- *Capacity building for relevant sectors*

Action 1.1.5 AIR management of IAS

- *Coordination of action plans to address the priority pathways in line with IAS Regulation*
- *List of IAS of transboundary concern*

Pripombe dodal [MP14]: Comment byItaly

- *Transboundary eradication plans*
- *Improve data collection and sharing*

Subtopic 2 Pollution of the sea

Action 1.2.1 AIR cooperation in marine litter management

Best practice sharing, capacity building and coordination

- *Cooperation in assessment of the status, target setting, monitoring, reporting and implementation of measures related to marine litter and micro litter carried out in accordance with relevant MSFD provisions*
- *Cooperation in drawing up and implementation of Land-based Source (LBS) National Action Plans*
- *Definition of joint measures (e.g. clean-up programmes)*

Action 1.2.2 Development and implementation of AI sub/regional oil spill contingency plan (ASOCSOP)

- *need of examination and extension of the contingency plan for Northern Adriatic to other AI countries,*
- *Risk assessment (possible risks and future events or circumstances that could damage the AI macro-region environment)*
- *Prevention measures*
- *Damage control measures*
- *Cross-cutting aspects: Capacity building in EUSAIR area, including communication to interested stakeholders and decision makers.*

Action 1.2.3 AIR cooperation in reduction of nutrients, chemicals and pharmaceuticals from diffuse and point sources on land

Support for development of suitable measures, practical solutions and policy recommendations for reduction of chemical and pharmaceutical substances.

- *Knowledge transfer and capacity building*
- *Testing of solutions and practical measures through cooperation in projects*
- *Policy recommendations from lessons learnt to relevant policy makers and other stakeholders.*

Support to cross-sectoral activities and measures that reduce nutrient discharges to the Sea from diffused (agriculture) and point sources (urban areas, aquaculture):

- *develop innovative and nature-based solutions (nutrient trapping structures/methods)*
- *improve monitoring and the knowledge base of nutrient flows and load*
- *raise awareness among relevant stakeholders about best practices*

1.5.1 Please prioritise all the below listed actions provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how important you find them for your country's cooperation in EUSAIR (all proposed Topic 1 actions together). (1 being the most important, 3 the least important).

Ranking					Countries ranked prioritisation of listed actions
MN	NM	IT	GR	SLO	
2	3	3	2	1	Action 1.1.1 Coastal and marine biodiversity information network
1		2	1	2	Action 1.1.2 Enhancing the network of marine protected areas
1	2	2	1	3	Action 1.1.3 Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP
1		2	2	6	Action 1.1.4 Cooperation in management of marine protected species
2		1	2	7	Action 1.1.5 AIR management of IAS
1		2	1	4	Action 1.2.1 AIR cooperation in marine litter management
1		1	3	8	Action 1.2.2 Development and implementation of AI sub/regional oil spill contingency plan (ASOCSoP)
3	1	3	1	5	Action 1.2.3 AIR cooperation in reduction of nutrients, chemicals and pharmaceuticals from diffuse and point sources on land

1.5.2 Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the Actions provided in the initial policy paper?

ITALY:

Action 1.1.1 should include the implementation and further development of common platforms for data exchange and coastal/maritime planning analysis created within previous projects especially focusing on the AIR (capitalization of all the Interreg Programmes 2014-2020). The outputs of the projects, especially those cofounded by ADRION, were created ad hoc to serve EUSAIR objectives and flagships, and must be considered as a starting point for the further implementation of the Strategy. Referring to Pillar 3 flagships, for example:

- PORTODIMARE project developed the Geoportal of Adriatic and Ionian Region (GAIR), a platform providing access to datasets and analytical tools designed for MSP and ICZM, and tested the use of the GAIR in 4 action plans feeding national maritime or coastal plans - Responding to Flagship 3;
- HARMONIA project developed a data portal on contaminants in the AIR, and 2 Adriatic – Ionian regional strategies, one for harmonized monitoring and assessment of contaminants in the marine environment, and one for a shared and harmonized evaluation of the risk due to contaminant dispersion from different sources of pollution – Responding to Flagship 1;

- IMPRECO produced a Strategy for EcoSystem management and conservation, and a mapping of Eco-system (ES) and Ecosystem Services (ESS) available on the GAIR – Responding to Flagship 2.

It is necessary to strengthen the actions in the fields of:

- 1) **Climate change adaptation** (including hydrogeological risk and coastal level rise);
- 2) **Marine Litter.**

Identifying hotspots must come before the drafting of cleanup programs

CROATIA:

1. Within Coastal and marine biodiversity information network: MSP information network (The use of European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) as a gateway to a range of data for MSP)
 2. Regarding 1.2.1. policy: Assuming that the LBS NAPs represent documents that the contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention should have continuously updated within the framework of MED POL activities, we propose with the action 1.2.1. an activity related to cooperation of countries in the implementation of the UNEP/MAP Regional Plan for the Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean. Plan is legally binding for the contracting parties, and it was updated at COP22 (Analyja, December 2021).
Through the LBS NAP, the states were obliged to include all measures related to the pollution of the sea by land-based sources and activities, including marine pollution, while the Regional Plan focuses exclusively on the issue of marine waste.
Croatia have incorporated the measures that were supposed to be an integral part of the LBS NAP into the Program of Measures for the Protection and Management of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area (adopted in 2017 in within the framework of obligations under Marine Strategy Framework Directive) and the LBS NAP as an document has never even adopted.
- cooperation of countries in the implementation of the UNEP/MAP Regional Plan for the Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean.

1.5.3 Are there any additional ideas how the listed challenges could be addressed by the EUSAIR concerning the thematic field of Topic 1? Can you suggest e.g. any additional Actions? Please remain within the parameters of macro-regional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope.

ITALY:

In the Sub topic 2, Pollution of the sea, include the following action: Action 1.2.4 Cooperation in order to **regulate the intensive maritime transport**.

- Knowledge transfer and capacity building;
- Testing of solutions and practical measures through cooperation in projects;
- Policy recommendations from lessons learnt to relevant policy makers and other stakeholders;

Raise awareness of pollution deriving from maritime traffic and marine litter from ships

As general comment, the EUSAIR Action Plan should focus on the aspects that can be **tackled at sea basin and/or macro-regional level**.

For example:

- tackle the cross-border and transnational aspects of MSP and ICZM;
- transfer of best practices developed by implementing EU Directives to nonmember States;
- further development of common platforms for data exchange and coastal/maritime environment monitoring and spatial planning analysis, already created within previous projects and initiatives focusing on the AIR (capitalization of all the Interreg Programmes 2014-2020, especially ADRION).

Climate change should have a stronger role in the EUSAIR AP: Sea level rise, erosion, marine ingression and saltwater intrusion, water scarcity and droughts, are the main risk factors for the coastal communities and the coastal territories where high level of ecosystem functions, as well as Environment, Economic, Social and Wellness functions, are located. As for the marine environment the effects of climate change can have a strong impact also on the pollution: a long period of drought can have a decisive effect on the flow of many rivers and, consequently, on the volumes of water flowing out of their mouths a combination of exceptional meteorological, hydrological, and marine conditions that added together, may have a particularly impactful effect on the composition of marine waters and on specific bathing water sites. Such phenomena are to be investigated in deep, and a macro-regional view can be fundamental to find joint solutions for the adaptation to climate change to guarantee a future of our coasts for next generations.

There should be some specific actions, for example:

- joint effort in the analysis of climate change related risks and in the elaboration of adaptation measures.

SLOVENIA:

One of the actions to be added to the sub-topic Pollution of the Sea is also reduction and prevention of pollutants and in particular micro plastics with filtration and upgrading of treatment plants.

3. Topic 2: Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity

2.1 Challenges

2.1.1 Please prioritise the challenges/opportunities provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how relevant they are as regards the added value of being tackled by EUSAIR. (1 being the most important, other follow in the numerical order)

In the Adriatic-Ionian Region there is:

Ranked					countries ranked prioritisation of challenges/opportunities
MN	NM	IT	GR	SLO	
1	1	3	1	7	<i>There is a strong need to counteract negative effects of human activities through integrated environmental management approaches in biodiversity conservation, recovery and management, as well as ensuring ecological connectivity</i>
4	7	5	6	6	<i>Long term viability of large carnivores' populations is threatened by habitat fragmentation and destruction due to urbanization, farming and linear infrastructure.</i>
6	6	2	5	5	<i>The public image of LC and related poaching results from increasing conflicts between LC and humans (lack of natural pray, loss of habitats, disturbance, poor waste management, road kill etc)</i>
3	4	6	7	4	<i>Need to harmonise national and transnational policies on management and conservation of large carnivores.</i>
2	2	7	4	1	<i>There is a lack of scientific evidence and coordinated monitoring.</i>
5	3	1	2	2	<i>Increasing pressures and land-use intensification resulting in habitat loss for migratory bird species (agriculture, water management, hydropower exploitation, gravel and sand exploitation, infrastructure/tourism/residential development etc.)</i>

7	5	4	3	3	Although countries in the region all reaffirmed their zero-tolerance approach to illegal bird killing in 2020, the implementation is lacking.
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2.1.2 Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the challenges provided in the initial policy paper with regard to your country’s involvement in Pillar 3/Topic 2 of EUSAIR??

ITALY: The challenges described in the policy paper are important and should be faced. However, the formulation of the challenges as such is sometimes too general. For example: it is necessary to specify the aim and the scope of the “coordinated monitoring”. The challenges should be rephrased in order to have a macro-regional scope and objective

(The official wording for “To address threats to marine biodiversity and contribute to the aim of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, climate and the planet” is “benefit of people, climate and the planet”)

CROATIA: Regarding **“Joint population management for large carnivores and awareness rising activities, protecting the habitats and working towards quality of life and coexistence”**: As additional info: The initiative to establish a transnational platform for large carnivores in the area of the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos was launched at the beginning of 2021. The aim of the platform is to establish a long-term mechanism for the exchange of experiences and data management of large carnivores (Slovenia to Greece for bears and to Bulgaria for wolves and lynxes). This approach reflects models established in other regions, such as the Alpine Convention or the Carpathian Convention, in which there is already established cooperation on the topic of tourism, agriculture, transboundary management of large animals, etc.

In 2022, the continuation of activities is financed by the Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMU) which runs the Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP) to support projects aiming for environmental protection in the countries covered by the programme. The target regions of the programme are the states of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasian countries and Central Asia.

2.1.3 Is there another challenge concerning the thematic field of *Topic 2: Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity* for which you see an added value of being addressed at EUSAIR level? The challenge should be specific to the EUSAIR territory and scope.

NORTH MACEDONIA:

- Strengthening the capacity of protected areas for management of nature resources
- Improving of implementation of management plans for protected areas, especially of the transboundary protected areas
- Improve of monitoring of key habitats and species according to Habitats and Brds Directives
- Rehabilitation of the key habitats of international importance.

ITALY:

- the increasing presence of non-indigenous invasive species is a growing challenge also in coastal/terrestrial areas. Not only animals, but also plants and other species are threatening the endemic ecosystems.
- Climate change is relevant also to Topic 2: loss of habitats and species, increasing droughts and extreme climatic events (floods, heat peaks). A joint analysis on climaterelated risks (and possible mitigation and adaptation measures should be included (e.g.: forest fires prevention, native forest restoration, campaigns to regenerate the tree cover, nurturing patches of forest and woodland in agricultural/urban landscapes, etc.).
- Adopt management strategies that foster the coexistence of large carnivores and traditional agricultural activities, such us grazing;
- Integral natural reserves and connections between protected areas are insufficient in coastal, transitional environment and wetlands to preserve biodiversity.

2.2 Objectives

The **objectives** of the 2014 Action Plan were updated in the initial policy paper:

To address threats to terrestrial biodiversity and contribute to the aim of EU Biodiversity Strategy that Europe's biodiversity will be on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, the planet, the climate and economy, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

To protect and enhance natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems with particular attention to the ecological connectivity of blue and green corridors/infrastructure.

2.2.1 Are there any suggestions for the reformulation/specification of the above objectives?

ITALY: Focus should be placed on the interdependency between biodiversity and climate objectives.
To align with the official wording (see Italian amendments to the Policy paper).

SLOVENIA: The TSG 3 is already addressing the challenge of Biodiversity strategy 2030 with the Blue and green corridors. Conclusions of TSG3 workshop in Tirana at the 7th EUSAIR forum. TSG3 is preparing the Action Plan for each country how to reach the goals of Biodiversity strategy 2030.

2.2.2 See proposed additional challenges under point 2.1.3. Additional objectives can be added accordingly.

SLOVENIA:

Transnational Terrestrial Habitats and Biodiversity topic should address threats to terrestrial biodiversity and by that contribute to the aim of EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Slovenia believes that the topic should focus on protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems, with particular attention to the ecological connectivity of blue and green corridors/infrastructure.

2.3 Key stakeholders

2.3.1 Which are the most relevant national/regional (e.g. national/regional institutions, agencies, others) and international (e.g. networks, associations, organisations, partnerships) stakeholders to be involved in order to reach most efficiently the objectives of the Topic 2. (objectives provided in point 2.2.1 and additional ones derived from challenges added under point 2.1.3, if relevant)? Indicative international key stakeholders are already listed in the initial policy paper.

NORTH MACEDONIA: Ministry of environment and physical planning, IUCN, UNEP/MAP, UNEP/CMS, UNDP, GIZ, SDC

ITALY:

- Regional and National Environmental Protection Agencies
- Universities and other Research and Scientific Institutions
- Regional and local authorities
- Authorities in charge of Protected Areas Management (local, regional, subregional level)
- Environmental and agricultural associations
- MEAS (Multilateral Environmental Agreements)
- NGOs active in the field of environmental protection
- Regional Sea Conventions

SLOVENIA: All already involved. UN/MAP.

2.4 Relevant policies

2.4.1 The following policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc. were identified as relevant for *Topic 2: Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity*. Please also think about the funding opportunities related to these policies. Which are the most relevant?

(Please tick the boxes before the selected policies)

Most relevant	Ranking	Some countries ranked policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc. by importance, some only marked the ones deemed most relevant
	NM	
4x (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	1	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
4x (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	6	Paris Agreement on Climate Change
3X (SLO,GR,IT)	5	The Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its amendments

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3X (SLO,GR,IT)	4	<i>Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)</i>
	7	<i>Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)</i>
3x (SLO,IT,MN)	8	<i>EU Green Deal</i>
2x (SLO,MN)	3	<i>Green Agenda for the Western Balkans</i>
4x (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	2	<i>EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 (COM(2020) 380 final)</i>
4x (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	1	<i>Birds (Directive 2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directives (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)</i>
2x (SLO,MN)	9	<i>EU Strategy on Green Infrastructure</i>
4x (SLO,GR,IT,MN)	11	<i>Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on invasive alien species (the IAS Regulation)</i>
3x (SLO,GR,MN)	12	<i>EU Regulation 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species</i>
2x (SLO,MN)	13	<i>Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)</i>
3x (SLO,IT,MN)	14	<i>A Farm to Fork Strategy (COM/2020/381 final)</i>

2.4.2 Is there another policy, or initiative, to be mentioned?

NORTH MACEDONIA:

- Convention of biodiversity
- CBD, Programme for protected areas
- Development of Natural Capital Account
- Development of model for ecosystem services
- Establish of Natura 2000 areas
- Preparation of action plans for protection of key species of international importance
- Ramsar Convention

- UNESCO Convention
- Convention on the migratory species -Bonn Convention- CMS
- CITES - Convention for international trade with endangered species
- Agreement for protection of bats
- SCI

ITALY:

- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and its Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- The Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols adopted in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP)

2.5 Actions

There are two **Actions** foreseen in the initial policy paper:

Action 2.1 Joint population management for large carnivores and awareness rising activities, protecting the habitats and working towards quality of life and coexistence

- joint population management plans for LC. Coordinate and exchange information on management practices, policies and approaches across the region, including national and regional management plans, with the aim of achieving population-level objectives
- support for international networking and exchange of experience between key stakeholders and authorities
- capacity-building
- increased cross-border collaboration on monitoring such as standardised methods and protocols
- cross-sectoral cooperation (agriculture, spatial planning, hunting), stakeholder engagement and awareness raising for improvement of sectoral plans and practices and reduction of conflicts
- support to accession countries in aligning with EU Nature Aquis

Action 2.4 Conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats (Support for implementation and enforcement of AEWA)

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- identify sites and habitats for migratory waterbirds occurring within their territory and encourage the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of these sites
- harmonization of research and monitoring methods
- improvement of the hunting legislation and its proper implementation
- capacity building
- Cross-sectoral cooperation (agriculture, hunting, spatial planning), stakeholder engagement and awareness raising for improvement of sectoral plans and practices
- Support to accession countries in aligning with EU Nature Aquis

2.5.1 Please indicate the relevance of each Action to reflect how important it is for your country's cooperation in EUSAIR. *(Please tick the relevant box before each Action)*

Relevant	Fairly relevant	Not relevant	Countries ranked relevance of each Action
2x (IT,MN)	3X (SLO,GR, NM)		<i>Action 2.1 Joint population management for large carnivores and awareness rising activities, protecting the habitats and working towards quality of life and coexistence</i>
4x (GR,IT,N M,MN)	1X (SLO)		<i>Action 2.4 Conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats</i>

2.5.2 Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the Actions provided in the initial policy paper?

ITALY: The relevance of Large carnivores is very different depending on the territories.

2.5.3 Are there any additional ideas how the listed challenges could be addressed on the EUSAIR level concerning the thematic field of Topic 2? Can you suggest e.g. any additional Actions? Please remain within the parameters of macro-regional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope.

MONTENEGRO: There is a need to ensure a better integration of the results and findings under Topic 2 in the spatial planning documents and indicators measuring their implementation.

ITALY:

- Joint mapping, monitoring, and management of non-indigenous invasive species.
- Adopt management strategies that foster the coexistence of large carnivores and traditional agricultural activities, such as grazing.
- Action 2.5: Awareness rising activities on implementation and financial aspects of environmentally friendly farming practices

SLOVENIA: The actions to be included in the Action plan should include upgrading of Green infrastructure and greening of cities in connection with drinking water, and Farm to Fork strategy.

4. Other Challenges and Actions

3.1.1 Do you have any additional ideas for Challenges or Actions to be addressed by EUSAIR concerning the Pillar 3, not already included under the above mentioned Topics? Please remain within the parameters of macro-regional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope.

MONTENEGRO: In general, it is necessary to underline more the need to strengthen even more transboundary cooperation contributing to a better one at macro regional level. Also, the need to communicate better and promote the EUSAIR topics and work done under EUSAIR both at regional and national levels.

ITALY: **Air quality** could be addressed as a new topic for Pillar 3, also in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Pripombe dodal [IT15]: Anthropogenic habitats and ecosystems are not explicitly included in Pillar3 scope. Therefore, the “farming practices” sounds a bit out of context. Maybe it should be rephrased by stressing the interaction between anthropic and natural ecosystems and habitats.

In order to foster the dialogue among the 4 Pillars, the application of the DNSH principle (Do Not Significant Harm) in the different objectives/Actions should be taken into duly consideration.

In relation to **climate change** as a horizontal topic, pillar3 could foresee specific actions for:

- 1) hydraulic safety, saline intrusion, subsidence
- 2) coastal erosion (sediments management, sediments farming at sea in accordance with MSP, recovery of dune systems, reduce anthropogenic subsidence, monitoring of coastline evolution),
- 3) hydrogeological instability
- 4) water resources management

It is indeed necessary to manage and to implement tools for risk detection in order to operate the necessary interventions, taking into account the evolution of meteorological phenomena due to climate change, therefore to improve the resilience of the territory

SLOVENIA:

We propose adding new topic: "Ballast water and other releases in the sea and water.", with the objectives:

- Reducing the introduction of non-native species and pollutants into the sea;
- Ensuring a good environmental status;
- Technical equipment on ships for cleaning ballast water;
- Introduce ship tracking - by discharge CISE system at the Maritime Administration;

We are suggesting the topic circular economy is addressed as a horizontal theme, within all pillars. Namely, we have already introduced new topic within TSG3 within past activities, especially with the preparation of the Green Matrix in 2017 (approved by Governing Board in 2018). That activity pathed the way to the development of EU Green Deal and Greener EUSAIR based on Circular Economy topic. The topic of circular economy would encourage activities for improving the state of the environment, such as Greening of maritime transport and transport in general and Ecosystem services.

Regarding cooperation with other pillars our concrete suggestions are:

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- Cooperation with Pillar 2: Connecting the existing infrastructure into more efficient systems; Advocating for soft mobility; Investing in renewable resources in terms of blue and green growth (i.e. geothermal water, modernization of the existing infrastructure for a possible upgrade to RES ...).
- Cooperation with Pillar 4: Increased promotion of local natural and cultural identity, with increased emphasis on environmental recognition; Reduction of mass tourism and reorientation of tourism from coastal cities to rural areas.

Regarding the social topics, they could be integrated into Pillar 3 by addressing the topics of raising the quality of living, addressing favourable microclimate and ensuring soft mobility.

5. EUSAIR governance

4.1.1 Please comment on your experience of engaging with the TSG3 and EUSAIR in general in terms of its effectiveness.

4.1.2 Do you have something to suggest in terms of improving the functioning of the TSG3 and EUSAIR in general?"