

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Italy – Croatia

 **EFFICIENTN2K**

DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

D.1.2.2 Declaration on institutional cooperation in implementing solutions

May 2024

DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Deliverable 1.2.2 Declaration on institutional cooperation in implementing solutions

Report information

This document was developed by the Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce and Ugento Municipality.



Report completed 31.05.2024.

Project information

Start date 01.08.2023.

End date 31.12.2024.

Total budget 249.144 EUR

Project website <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/efficientn2k>

This project is co-funded by the European Union.

This project is co-financed by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The views expressed in this report are the sole responsibility of the Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Office for NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Office for Cooperation with NGOs

Citation recommendation: Špika, M., Zrnčić, V., Miletić, A., Scordella, G., Dadamo, M., Pinto, M. (2024). *Developing solutions with key stakeholders*. Deliverable 1.2.2 Declaration on institutional cooperation in implementing solutions. Interreg Italy – Croatia EFFICIENTN2K Project, 8 pages.





Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Context.....	1
1.2. Purpose.....	1
1.3. Participants.....	2
2. PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT OF SOLUTIONS.....	3
2.1. Public entities collaboration.....	3
2.2. Technological innovations for monitoring and management of Natura 2000 sites	4
2.3. Improvement of fire prevention (Italy).....	4
2.4. Regulation of anchoring (Croatia).....	5
2.5. Catalog of best practices to reduce illegal Fishing	6
3. CONCLUSIONS.....	8
3.1. Institutional commitment	8



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

The EFFICIENTN2K project aligns with the European Union's environmental policies, focusing on the protection and management of marine and coastal areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 areas are an integral part of the European ecological network established to preserve biodiversity by safeguarding natural habitats and threatened species of community importance. Effective management of these areas is crucial not only for biodiversity conservation but also for the well-being of local communities that rely on natural resources.

Marine and coastal Natura 2000 areas face significant pressures from human activities, including unregulated tourism, wildfires, overfishing, and maritime traffic. These activities can severely degrade natural habitats and threaten biodiversity.

The main challenge lies in improving surveillance and enforcement of existing regulations to prevent and mitigate negative impacts. Moreover, cross-border collaboration is essential to address these challenges effectively, given the transnational nature of marine ecosystems and the threats affecting them.

1.2. Purpose

The EFFICIENTN2K project aims to strengthen institutional collaboration and improve the governance of protected areas through the implementation of shared strategies and innovative solutions. The objective is to enhance the effectiveness of the management of Natura 2000 areas, with a particular focus on advanced technology-based solutions and sustainable management practices. The project engages a range of key stakeholders, including governmental entities, non-governmental organisations, and local communities, to ensure a holistic and integrated approach.



The Declaration to be drafted and signed at the end of the workshop represents a formal commitment among the institutions involved from Italy and Croatia to actively collaborate on the implementation of the identified solutions. It will serve as a roadmap for future actions and as a reference point for evaluating the progress made towards the project's objectives.

1.3. Participants

Name	Surname	Body	Role
Giuseppe	Scordella	Regional Natural Park "Litorale di Ugento"	Director
Marco	Dadamo	Regional Natural Park Mar Piccolo	Director
Rocco	Malatesta	Management Consortium of Torre Guaceto	President
Domagoj	Lažeta	PI Sea and Karst	Director
Zrinka	Jakl	NGO Sunce	Executive Board Member



2. PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT OF SOLUTIONS

Project partners organized several workshops within the EFFICIENTN2K project, to discuss conclusions from the developed analysis of institutional and legal framework with key stakeholders, validate results and develop possible solutions for identified problems. Solutions are then further developed and elaborated with concrete action plans (with timeline and resources needed) within the available Report on proposed solutions for improving surveillance and enforcement. In this Declaration we summarize core aspects of proposed solutions as a basis for future collaboration.

2.1. Public entities collaboration

The establishment of a Coordination Table among public entities aims to facilitate the exchange of information, the harmonization of management policies, and the joint planning of surveillance activities.

The table should include representatives of the institutions involved in the management and surveillance of protected areas on a local and regional level. The Coordination Table should serve as a meeting platform to regularly review current policies, discuss new challenges, share best practices and initiate positive changes and strategies. Each meeting should be documented with detailed minutes to track progress and decisions made. The goal of the Coordination Table is to enhance cooperation among entities for the surveillance of Natura 2000 sites, enabling a better response to environmental emergencies through a coordinated strategy. It also allows continuous data exchange that can support the decision-making of the involved entities, based on up-to-date and shared scientific data among all entities represented in the coordination table. Furthermore, the coordination table will lead to an optimization of resources through shared planning of surveillance and management activities which eliminate duplication of work, and greater effectiveness in combating illegal activities. The establishment of this coordination table represents a fundamental step towards more integrated and effective management of Natura 2000 sites, ensuring the long-term protection of these valuable ecosystems. Collaborative joined actions on the field of these competent authorities involved in management and surveillance of Natura 2000



sites prove to further increase collaboration and thus contribute to surveillance and enforcement efficiency.

2.2. Technological innovations for monitoring and management of Natura 2000 sites

The development of guidelines for the implementation of innovative technologies for monitoring and managing Natura 2000 sites, specifically drones, artificial intelligence (AI), and other advanced monitoring systems is identified as one of the possible solutions. The goal is to create an operational manual that details the optimal use of technologies, safety procedures, privacy and data protection, and emergency response protocols. Furthermore, the guidelines will also address legal aspects concerning the use of technologies to ensure compliance with all regulations regarding privacy and environmental protection. A specific capacity-building training course for surveillance agencies on technology usage is encouraged to provide the opportunity to improve and facilitate surveillance and monitoring activities within protected areas using modern technology.

Both partners, Sunce and the Municipality of Ugento, will organize and implement such capacity-building trainings within the scope of this project. This technological approach aims to strengthen surveillance and management capabilities, enhancing the effectiveness of conservation actions at these critical sites.

2.3. Improvement of fire prevention (Italy)

The solution for improving fire prevention in Natura 2000 sites focuses on an integrated approach that combines awareness-raising actions with enhanced collaboration among agencies for effective data exchange. This approach aims to significantly reduce the risk of fires through better understanding and management of the environmental and human dynamics that contribute to fires in protected areas and Natura 2000 sites. The goal is to educate the public on the importance of habitat conservation and safe practices to adopt to prevent fires.



These awareness activities will include engaging stakeholders and incorporating information material and educational programs into upcoming workshops and events of the agencies, which illustrate the causes of fires, their devastating impact on biodiversity, and how everyday actions can reduce risks. The established collaborative platform of various regional agencies and entities responsible for the surveillance of Natura 2000 sites will allow the collection and real-time sharing of crucial data related to fires, areas particularly affected by fires, vegetation, and other environmental variables that influence fire risk. Access to up-to-date and accurate data will lead to quick and informed decisions in emergency situations and in implementing more effective preventive strategies. This solution leads to an improvement in fire prevention at Natura 2000 sites and is based on education and inter-agency collaboration to optimize the collection and use of environmental data.

Within the scope of this project, fires are the focus of the Municipality of Ugento, while Sunce will support this solution by bringing experience from Croatia regarding fire prevention and using knowledge gained to share it as a possible solution for the improvement of fire protection in Croatian Natura 2000 sites.

2.4. Regulation of anchoring (Croatia)

Seagrasses are one of the most important and endangered marine habitats in the Mediterranean Sea. They provide food, shelter, an area for reproduction and growth of numerous marine organisms, produce oxygen, and protect the coast from erosion. In this way, they support fisheries and the rest of the economy of local communities. Globally, these meadows are responsible for more than 10% of the carbon stored in the seas, although they comprise only 0.2% of the total surface area of the seabed. It is estimated that they bind carbon up to 35 times faster than tropical rainforests and play an extremely important role in mitigating climate change. Seagrasses meadows, especially Posidonia, are threatened by the coast filling, wastewater, and use of trawling fishing gear. But the main threat is free anchoring which causes damage to Posidonia meadows.



Regulation of anchoring is complex issue regulated through several sectors in Croatia, and thus requires involvement of different sectors, especially maritime domain sector and special planning, along with nature conservation sector. It is thus necessary to strengthen cooperation between sectors and communication with the public, especially boaters. Regulation of anchoring in Natura 2000 sites is possible only on national level, in cooperation between maritime domain and nature conservation. But regulation should be gradual, as the current infrastructure isn't enough to accommodate all boats that are currently free anchoring. As a pre-condition in doing so, habitat maps and data on pressures should be available to be able to identify priority sites and propose regulation strategies. Installation of eco - moorings is more expensive than current practices but needed if we want to protect priority habitats of EU. Effort should be put in explaining the benefits and technical specifications of such mooring system, especially to potential concessionaires and users. Communication campaigns and activities are essential when going into new regulations and prohibitions. These should focus on other sectors involved, users and beneficiaries (landowners, marinas, charter industry, nautical tourists) and public (as economic issues will be questioned).

This solution is focus of NGO Sunce, while Municipality of Ugento will participate in this solution by gathering knowledge and experiences for potential similar actions in the future.

2.5. Catalog of best practices to reduce illegal Fishing

Another possible solution identified is the development of a "Catalogue of Best Practices to Reduce Illegal Fishing" in Natura 2000 sites to provide a comprehensive resource that helps counter one of the most serious threats to marine and coastal biodiversity. The idea is to develop a document that collects, analyzes, and disseminates the most effective and sustainable practices to prevent and limit illegal fishing activities. This Catalogue will be developed through a collaborative process among the agencies responsible for monitoring Natura 2000 sites and based on their best practices. During the workshop, information will be





collected on successful methods and innovative strategies adopted in various contexts.

An important aspect of the catalog will be its function as a guide for local and national authorities in the formulation of policies based on successful experiences and in the implementation of more effective surveillance cooperation programs. Once compiled, the catalogue will be distributed in digital format among stakeholders and made available online. It will also be used for capacity building training for entities involved in surveillance and enforcement in fishing sector, as well as for raising awareness among the public and local communities about the importance of protecting marine resources and the severity of illegal fishing.



3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1. Institutional commitment

The undersigned institutions commit in the coming period to collaborate on the development of action plans and implementation of the identified solutions, targeted at the identified solutions to improve surveillance and enforcement within protected coastal and marine Natura 2000 sites.

Signatures:

Name	Surname	Body	Position	Signature
Giuseppe	Scordella	Regional Natural Park “Litorale di Ugento”	Director	
Marco	Dadamo	Regional Natural Park Mar Piccolo	Director	
Rocco	Malatesta	Management Consortium of Torre Guaceto	President	
Domagoj	Lažeta	PI Sea and Karst	Director	
Zrinka	Jakl	NGO Sunce	Executive Board Member	

