



CYCLADES Life

After LIFE Conservation Plan

March 2018





CYCLADES LIFE:

Integrated Monk seal conservation of Northern Cyclades

LIFE12/NAT/GR/000688

After LIFE Conservation Plan

March 2018

Project ID	
Location	Northern Cyclades Island complex, Greece
Start date	01.07.2013
End date	31.03.2018
Total cost	2.479.471,68
EU contribution	1.677.977
% of eligible costs	67,67%
Co-funders	Prince Albert II Foundation
Project Website	www.cycladeslife.gr
Coordinating Beneficiary details	
Beneficiary	World Wide Fund for Nature – WWF Greece
Contact person	Constantinos Liarikos, Head of Conservation
Project Leader	Dr. Spyros Kotomatas
WWF Core Project Team	Christos Papadas, Elina Samara, Vangelis Gavalas, Maria Livanou, Amalia Alberini, Ioli Christopoulou, Natasha Maragou, Pantelis Sarris
Postal Address	Lembessi 21, 11743, Athens, Greece
Telephone	+30-210-3314893
Fax	+30-210-3247578
Email	c.liarikos@wwf.gr
Associated Beneficiaries details	
Beneficiary name	Contact person
MOm	Panos Dendrinis
Development Corporation of Local Authorities of Cyclades SA	Kostas Voltis
Harokopion University	Apostolos Papadopoulos
Tethys Research Institute	Giuseppe Nortabartolo di Sciara
Ministry of Environment and Energy	Charilaos Nikokavouras
Decentralized Administration Authority of the Aegean	Panagiotis Pagonis

Contents

Contents.....	1
The site	2
Project Technical Summary.....	3
Main achievements	5
Current situation: SWOT analysis.....	7
After LIFE priorities and activities	8
Our vision.....	8
Overall outlook.....	9
Collective management and MPA governance	10
Surveillance and enforcement	12
Research and monitoring	14
Local Development and MPA funding	16
Local engagement	18
Dissemination and replication.....	19
The after LIFE “ecosystem”	21
Conclusions	22

The site



The Islet of Gyaros is situated in the Cyclades island Complex, in the Aegean Archipelago in Greece. It is a sizeable uninhabited islet that has been used as a place of exile since the Roman times. During modern times it was used as a place of exile and imprisonment for political prisoners in two historical instances: After the seizure of the Greek civil war in 1948 and during the military dictatorship between 1967 and 1974. After that it was occasionally used as a firing field by the Greek Navy. Its use by the government and the military, as well as its characterization as a “marine fortress” have meant that for a large part of modern history it has remained inaccessible to civilians.

Its inaccessibility, which also owes to the fierce wind conditions in the area, its peculiar geography and its position within the archipelago are some of the reasons for the valuable ecological values present on the Islet and the surrounding seas.

Its waters present some of the most pristine underwater habitats (*Posidonia* meadows and coralligenous formations) known in the Aegean, it is a valuable refuge for wild-caught commercial species, while on its land it hosts a variety of reptile species, important populations of raptors and the largest known sheerwater colony in the country.

Mostly though, Gyaros is known to be hosting one of the largest breeding populations of the globally threatened Mediterranean monk seal worldwide.

Project Technical Summary

The CYCLADES Life project aimed at establishing a unique marine protected area in the Gyaros Natura 2000 site: NISOS GYAROS KAI THALASSIA ZONI GR4220033 and its adjacent waters in Cyclades, Greece.

The CYCLADES Life project partners managed to successfully implement all foreseen actions with concrete and impressive results, despite the challenges faced due to a number of unexpected obstacles that we have encountered, mostly related to administrative delays caused by the limited capacity of the state authorities due to Greece's financial crisis.

In terms of Preparatory Actions two management plans (Ecosystem Based Management Plan and Marine Spatial Plan), an Ecological Study, a legislative blueprint for the designation of the area as a Wildlife Refuge, a Special Environmental Study (SES) and a legislative blueprint for the designation of the Gyaros Marine Protected Area (MPA) have been completed.

In relevance to the Concrete Conservation Actions, all activities have been implemented as planned. These encompassed:

- ✓ the construction and operation of a model remote Surveillance System (radar, long-range infrared camera, telecommunications equipment, and command center),
- ✓ the establishment and successful operation of the Gyaros Consortium of Stakeholders (a body consisting of 15 representatives of strategically selected stakeholders who discussed negotiated and unanimously agreed objectives and measures of the MPA),
- ✓ the formal designation of the marine area around Gyaros as a Wildlife Refuge,
- ✓ the annual underwater and terrestrial clean-ups,
- ✓ the selection, mapping and construction of a network of 3 underwater trails,
- ✓ the construction of 15 *Posidonia* friendly moorings
- ✓ the placement of 1,100 artificial dens resulting in a significant rise in the spawning habitat and the population density of *Octopus vulgaris*, a key prey species of the Mediterranean monk seal.
- ✓ The implementation of 17 training seminars for the local fishermen and for other key stakeholders of MPA's neighbouring islands Syros and Andros on a number of topics related to sustainable fisheries and MPA management

In relevance to the Monitoring Actions of the project, a full monitoring program on the impact of the project on the natural and human environment of Gyaros and the wider

area was implemented. The results showed that over the project's duration the local societies and the professional fishermen of Syros and Andros have become more supportive of the idea of protecting Gyaros natural environment and are positive toward linking the establishment of the Gyaros MPA with local sustainable development. In parallel the data on the marine and terrestrial natural environment of Gyaros, provided ample evidence that the status of the island's nature remained exceptionally pristine.

Specifically for the key target of the project, a comprehensive monitoring program on the local monk seal population continued throughout the project resulting in: a) the annual estimation of the demographic and reproductive parameters (population size estimated at 70 adult individuals with an average number of 9 pups born each year) and b) the collection of a substantial data on the habitat use and behaviour of the species.

Throughout the projects implementation, important efforts were directed to the dissemination and communication of its actions and results. Overall:

- the project's website has been regularly updated, with more than 950,000 visits recorded.
- news and press releases generated more than 400 articles and media coverage featured in both national and local TV and radio shows.
- more than 2,000,000 people received information on the project through the online and printed tools.
- 10 open public events were organised in Syros, Andros, Athens and Thessaloniki, to present to the public Gyaros' natural and historical features and the CYCLADES Life project, in which close to 4,000 people participated

in relation to the dissemination to scientific/conservation community the project staff has presented the project and its results in 14 international and in 6 national meetings/conferences, with a total attendance of more than 10,000 scientists and conservationists, while at the same time 14 scientific publications have been produced.

Main achievements

During the almost 5 years of implementation the “CYCLADES” Life project has taken on to provide solutions to complex management problems, through development and implementation of tools that have been highly innovative in the Greek and Mediterranean setting. It has been a turbulent journey, requiring constant adaptive management, at the which, though, some key results have been achieved:

- ✓ **Profiling of the Gyaros habitat.** Five years after the commencement of the project, Gyaros and its conservation values and needs, are well known to local communities, decision makers and the wider public. The once unknown and “mysterious” islet stands today in the centre of attention of a wide and diversified community of practice looking at how to embed and further the approaches of the CYCLADES Life.
- ✓ **Putting participatory management to practice.** The CYCLADES LIFE project was designed according to the principles of ecosystem-based management, with the aspiration of putting this approach to practice for the first time in Greece and the Mediterranean. To this end, a co-management committee that negotiated stakeholder views and aspirations was set up and delivered an unanimously agreed management plan. This committee remains in operation and is geared up for delivering good place-based management in the future.
- ✓ **Operation of a remote surveillance system.** Surveillance costs have always been the “Achilles heel” of marine protected areas. The CYCLADES Life utilized –for the first time in the Mediterranean Region- state-of-the-art technologies to develop and pilot a cost-effective remote surveillance system that will not only assure the feasibility of continuous surveillance for the Gyaros site, but will also provide a useful blueprint for the development of similar viable solutions in other MPAs.
- ✓ **Putting in place conservation infrastructures and practices.** Apart from the aforementioned surveillance system, the CYCLADES Life project successfully installed some important conservation infrastructures (moorings, underwater trails, octopus dens) and acquired necessary equipment (boat, computers, field equipment, etc) that will continue to contribute to the conservation of the area for many years ahead. Similarly, it developed and piloted an array of practices, ranging from volunteer clean-ups to scientific research activities- that will be recurrently implemented in the future.
- ✓ **Connecting history to conservation.** Gyaros, apart from its ecological importance, is a place of immense historical significance for the republic of Greece. It symbolizes the darkest moments of the country’s history and constitutes

a living museum of all the things the country had to struggle to leave behind. Whilst only and implicit objective of the project, the CYCLADES Life paid particular attention in carefully balancing the different perceptions of the place and the different approaches of involved stakeholders. As a result, today historians, former exiles and conservationists, to name a few of the stakeholders, sit side by side in discussing the future use and management of the site. This is a crucial achievement as, apart from the evident semantic importance, guarantees that the future conservation of the site will not take a back seat *vis-à-vis* cultural and historical concerns.

Current situation: SWOT analysis

The current situation regarding the after-LIFE period of the project is depicted in the following SWOT analysis table:

<p>Strenghts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid knowledge base and conservation infrastructures in place • Innovative character of approaches Key local stakeholders actively engaged • Large part of the funding already secured Capable staff on the ground • Good collaborative relations between key partners • Wide network of experts willing and able to engage • Visibility in surrounding communities and overall positive stances 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity and high "maintenance cost" of some of the approaches (surveillance system, co-management committee) • Large part of the required budgets still unsecured • Some of the key partners/stakeholders faced with restricted budgets and complex governance/ administrative procedures
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large political and stakeholder interest in MPA management Interest of funders in supporting innovative, locally based integrated conservation projects • Forthcoming local administration elections could enable the securing of political commitments • New EMFF funding lines (F-LAGs) open many opportunities for funding future activities 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still unstable political and financial environment in the country • Forthcoming local administration elections could signal a change in local administration stances • Possible delays in delivery of positive socioeconomic results could lead to a loss of balance between conservation and development and to stakeholder disengagement and disappointment • Contained size of habitat makes it vulnerable to large scale accidents/disasters (e.g. oil spill)

After LIFE priorities and activities

Our vision

In the outset of implementing the CYCLADES Life project, the following vision was formulated to guide our work:

We strive to create a novel and model Marine Protected Area (MPA), around Gyaros island in the Cyclades, Greece, together with the local societies that will operate effectively for the benefit of both humans and the natural environment.

This MPA will be exceptional, as it will:

- *conserve unique species, like the Mediterranean monk seal and important habitats. like Posidonia meadows and coralligenous formations*
- *support local livelihoods*
- *ensure ample fish for all*
- *unite people*
- *create ideas*
- *keep history and culture alive*
- *open new horizons and establish paradigms*

Today, and following the work and achievements described in previous sections, our guiding vision for the next five years can be expressed as follows:

Utilizing the results obtained through the CYCLADES Life and building upon the achievements gained, we have developed a comprehensive plan of actions for the 2018-2022 period that will:

- ***secure the effective protection of the natural environment (marine and terrestrial), especially of the Monachus monachus population,***
- ***further promote local sustainable development, and***
- ***consolidate the management of the Gyaros MPA, as a model MPA in Greece and the Mediterranean region.***

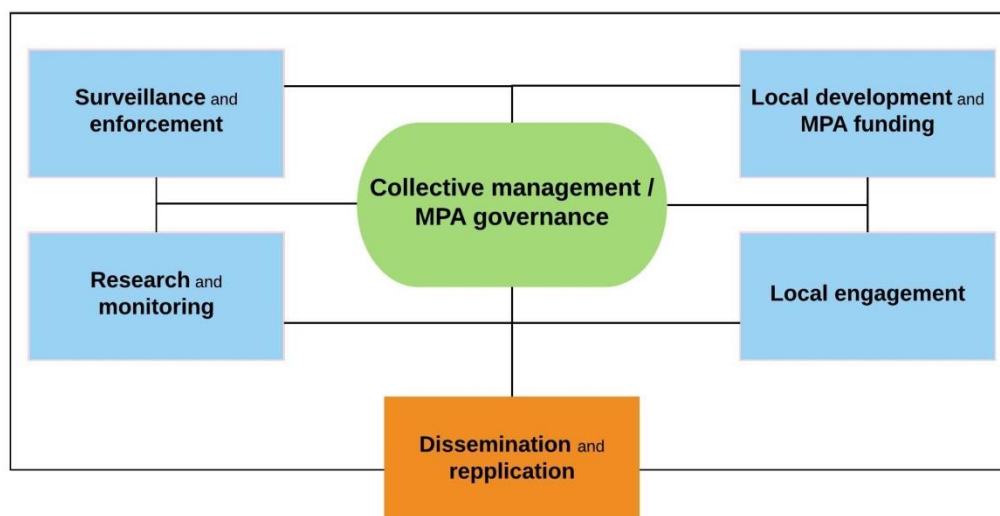
Overall outlook

For the after-LIFE planning of conservation work in the project site, a reference period of 5 years (2018-2022) has been selected. During this period it is considered crucial that the established collective management scheme will continue to operate and guide the development and implementation of measures and activities, while the official governance scheme (i.e. Management Body of Cyclades Protected Areas) is organized and empowered.

Concomitant to this, activities should be gradually developed and deployed on four parallel streams:

1. Maintaining and strengthening the surveillance of the site and the enforcement of agreed regulations.
2. Implementing key scientific activities for the monitoring of the site and the closing of pending knowledge gaps, with the aim of informing future conservation interventions.
3. Development of local economic activities that will support livelihoods, increase local support for the MPA and generate funds for the MPA management.
4. Implementing initiatives that will maintain the engagement of local constituencies in the cause of conserving Gyaros.

On the basis of the aforementioned, and in the framework of the pilot role we wish Gyaros to assume, activities should also be directed towards the wider dissemination of the exemplary approaches taken in the site and the support of replication efforts in other sites.



Collective management and MPA governance



The co-management committee established during the CYCLADES Life project constitutes one of the project's most notable achievements, and a guarantee that stakeholders will remain engaged and continue to support the operation and management of the site. The operation of this collective management body is a top priority for the next years. Indeed it is also a feasible one, since all participating parties have declared their willingness to remain engaged and as the pertinent costs are quite low.

During the last semester of the CYCLADES Life project, the Greek Government enacted a new legislation that foresees the restructuring of the National Protected Areas system and which provides for one central Management Body for all the NATURA 2000 sites of the entire Cyclades island complex. The same law provides for the operation of local advisory boards to guide the practice of the central management body in specific sites.

Following this development, it is vital that alongside of securing the operation of the co-management committee, specific efforts should be directed on the one hand in ensuring the inclusion of this committee in the overall governance of the Cyclades NATURA 2000 (probably through the assumption of an “advisory body” role) and on the other hand through the provision of guidance and advice for the proper operation of the Cyclades Management Body.

A brief presentation of the identity of the activities under this stream is depicted in the following table:

Collective management and MPA governance	
Scope and objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To maintain the Gyaros co-management committee in operation 2. To embed it in the new governance scheme enacted by the government for the NATURA 2000 sites of the Cyclades complex 3. To support the overall operation of the Cyclades Management Body
Enabling factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The coordinators of the Gyaros co-management committee (WWF Greece and the Cyclades Development Agency) willing to maintain this role 2. All parties participating in the Gyaros co-management committee willing to remain engaged 3. Ministry of Environment interested in the continuous operation of the Gyaros co-management committee and its inclusion in the Cyclades NATURA 2000 governance scheme
Risk management	No important risks identified
Main operator(s)	WWF Greece, Cyclades Development Agency
Other Partners	Ministries of Environment and of Culture, Hellenic Coast Guard, Decentralized Administration of the Aegean, Regional Government of South Aegean, Municipalities of Syros and Andros, Cyclades Chamber of Commerce, Fishers associations of Syros and Andros, MOM, Natural History Museum of Crete, National Marine Research Centre
Estimated cost	c. €10.000 p.a.
Secured funding	Funding secured for 2018, WWF Greece and the Cyclades Development Agency willing to own-fund their participation and coordination costs, WWF Greece willing to own-fund all costs relating to necessary advocacy work.

Surveillance and enforcement



The maintenance of an effective surveillance and enforcement mechanism in the Gyaros site is of the outmost importance in order to ensure that measures agreed by the involved parties are actually enforced. By ensuring that, it will encourage local users to maintain regulation-abiding conduct, it will empower the members of the co-management committee to remain involved in the negotiation and agreement of management measures and it will lay the proper foundations for the organization of local development activities through alternative forms of tourism, sustainable entrepreneurship, etc.

The future surveillance and enforcement system will be based on the foundations laid by the CYCLADES Life project and utilize the remote-surveillance infrastructure already developed and the equipment purchased (patrol speedboat, radar, camera, UAS/drones, remote surveillance stations, etc). To that end, a memorandum of understanding –foreseeing the collaborative operation of the surveillance system in the next years- has been signed between WWF Greece, the Ministry of Environment, and the Hellenic Coast Guard and necessary funds have been secured.

Upon the maturation of the new governance scheme, and once sufficient clarity on the roles of the co-management committee and the Cyclades Management Body has been established, involved parties have agreed to embark on a new discussion on the proper appropriation of roles in the surveillance of the Gyaros MPA.

The following table describes the vital characteristics of this workstream:

Surveillance and enforcement	
Scope and objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure the enforcement of agreed regulations 2. To bring the number and seriousness of illegal activities to the absolute possible minimum 3. To put in practice a collaborative scheme for coordinating and implementing surveillance in the site.
Enabling factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All necessary infrastructures and equipment in place 2. Sufficient –in number and training- human resources 3. Remote surveillance system keeps costs to the absolute necessary 4. Memorandum of understanding between WWF Greece, Ministry of Environment, and Hellenic Coast Guard signed 5. Funds secured for the next three years
Risk management	<p>As the responsibility of the surveillance and the enforcement of legislation in the sea is clearly assigned to the Hellenic Coast Guard no serious administrative risks are foreseen. There exists the risk, though, that established collaborative relations are distorted affecting the effectiveness of the surveillance implementation. The signed memorandum, the operation of the co-management committee and the good collaboration terms between the staff of the two main operators form a safety net for the resolution of such possible concerns.</p> <p>A second, more probable, risk relates to the lack of funding for the operation of the surveillance system (including the maintenance of surveillance infrastructures) after 2020. Although both main operators are committed (WWF Greece) or bound by law (Hellenic Coast Guard) to maintain at least their core activities on site, a serious effort is required to develop new income streams for the management of the site.</p>
Main operator(s)	WWF Greece, Hellenic Coast Guard,
Other Partners	Gyaros, co-management Committee, Ministry of Environment, Cyclades Development Agency, Management Body of Cyclades Protected Areas
Estimated cost	c. €300.000 p.a.
Secured funding	<p>Surveillance project funding secured until 2020 (€200.000 p.a.).</p> <p>WWF Greece committed to maintaining its core local field team in operation even in the absence of external funding.</p> <p>Hellenic Coast Guard receives core operational funding from the Greek government that suffices for part of the surveillance.</p>

Research and monitoring



During the implementation of the CYCLADES Life project, a solid scientific base on the status of the marine and terrestrial environment of the Gyaros wider area was developed. Through this work we reconfirmed that Gyaros hosts the largest monk seal population (27% of the Greek and 14% of the global population), we mapped the unique, extended and healthy marine habitats (*Posidonia* meadows, coralligenous formations) that host important marine organisms and fish populations, we discovered a unique colony of sheerwaters, the largest in Greece, and embarked to analyze the socioeconomic attributes of the island communities surrounding the islet.

During the next years, it is imperative to fill the few remaining gaps and to formulate the monitoring plans necessary to inform the adaptive management of the site and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the implemented measures. The most important elements of this scientific work are:

- The monitoring of key species and habitats (monk seal, avifauna, terrestrial and marine habitats)
- The systematic research and monitoring of fisheries and fish resources
- A grazing study to identify pertinent pressures and if necessary a study for the control of feral goat and rabbit populations
- A study looking at the pressure rats exert on bird populations and evaluating the need for the control of the rat population

The most important traits of this workstream are presented in the following table:

Research and monitoring	
Scope and objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that the level of monitoring is sufficient to inform adaptive management 2. To close the few remaining knowledge gaps regarding the site's ecology and threats.
Enabling factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sufficient and solid base on the status of the site's environment is already in place 2. A network of capable and willing research partners has been already set-up and tested
Risk management	Bar the potential lack of funding, no serious risk is identified. To deal with this funding risk partners will seek external funding, train field teams so that activities can be combined and resources economized and develop new income streams for the management of the site.
Main operator(s)	WWF Greece, National Marine Research Centre, Natural History Museum of Crete, MOm, Hellenic Ornithological Society
Other Partners	Gyaros, co-management committee, University of the Aegean, Harokopion University of Athens
Estimated cost	c. 150.000-200.000 p.a.
Secured funding	<p>WWF Greece committed to maintaining its core local field team in operation even in the absence of external funding.</p> <p>€300.000 have been secured for the assessment of fish resources by the National Marine Research Centre</p> <p>€100.000 have been secured by WWF Greece for research regarding fisheries and sustainable small scale fishing practices for the Northern Cyclades Island complex.</p>

Local Development and MPA funding



Since the inception of the project, WWF Greece's strategy has been to ensure that, in parallel with nature conservation, new sustainable activities will be promoted and alternative livelihoods will be developed to support local societies. Apart from its evident social dimension, this "development" element is also crucial for the successful future management of the site. On the one hand to establish local support and buy-in, and on the other to help generate new sustainable funding streams for the management of the MPA.

For this purpose, in the next years WWF Greece and the Cyclades Development Agency, along with a number of other partners, will collaborate to:

- Define the exact funding needs for the management of the site and map potential funding sources.
- Incept and pilot innovative funding mechanisms that bring together sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainable MPA funding.
- Solicit new donors with the willingness to support management activities and/or scientific work.
- Encourage and support local actors to develop business activities that also contribute to the site's conservation goals.
- Investigate the potential for recurring scientific and management work to be covered through academic and voluntary processes (e.g. EVS programmes, internships, degree studies).
- Set-up a framework that will enable the channeling of EMFF local development funding (F-LAGs) to activities that support the operation of the MPA.

The following table summarizes the key attributes of this planned work:

Local development and MPA funding	
Scope and objective	To ensure the social, political and financial viability of the Gyaros MPA, through the development of sustainable business practices and the generation of new income streams for the MPA.
Enabling factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A wide network of expert partners already engaged 2. Interest and willingness of local stakeholders 3. Core funds to support this workstream secured 4. New EU funding mechanisms potentially able to support the process
Risk management	<p>While there is no important risk to the implementation of this workstream, there exists a high risk as to its final effectiveness. For this reason expert partners have been solicited to support the implementation of this work.</p> <p>An additional risk exists regarding the willingness of the Greek State to enable and assimilate potentially highly innovative funding instruments. Yet, we consider that in the face of the economic crisis and the need to fund a very expanded network of MPAs throughout the country, this risk is small.</p>
Main operator(s)	Cyclades Development Agency, WWF Greece
Other Partners	Vertigo Lab (FR), Impact hub (SW), WWF Netherlands, WWF Switzerland, MAVA Foundation, Cyclades Chamber of Commerce, Municipalities of Syros and Andros
Estimated cost	Not defined yet
Secured funding	<p>WWF Greece and the Cyclades Development Agency committed to maintaining their engagement even in the absence of external funding.</p> <p>€ 50.000 have been secured by Vertigo Lab to run the assessment of needs and potential income streams and support the development of innovative funding mechanisms (project Blue Seeds).</p> <p>€ 90.000 have been secured by a consortium of WWF Netherlands, WWF Switzerland and Impact Hub to run a sustainable business incubation process in the area (project Impact Ventures)</p> <p>Core operational costs have been secured by the Cyclades Development Agency to run supporting awareness, training and capacity building activities.</p>

Local engagement



To secure the long-term acceptance of the conservation measures and the effective management of the Gyaros MPA, it is imperative to maintain the engagement of the local societies in key actions and to build a strong sense of ownership for the presence of the Gyaros MPA in their “neighborhood”.

Alongside with the co-management body, additional activities will be implemented to engage the local societies in the conservation efforts. These will include:

- Regular clean-ups of monk seal habitats in Gyaros with volunteers.
- Workshops and training seminars for the local public on environmental protection and to the sustainable use of resources.
- Environmental education activities at the schools to build responsible, environmentally aware and active citizens.
- Using the wide portfolio of WWF Greece awareness and mobilization tools to profile environmental messages during local events.

In a nutshell, the attributes of this workstream are depicted below:

Local engagement	
Scope and objective	To ensure sustained local support for environmental causes and for the Gyaros MPA
Enabling factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sufficiently engaged local constituency 2. Long experience of WWF Greece in similar activities
Risk management	No risks foreseen
Main operator(s)	WWF Greece
Other Partners	Cyclades Development Agency, co-management committee
Estimated cost	c. €30.000 p.a.
Secured funding	Core funding secured by WWF Greece in the context of the operation of its local team and the implementation of other awareness and engagement projects. Additional project funding for specific activities (e.g. clean-ups) will be sought on an ad hoc basis.

Dissemination and replication



As the number of MPAs in Greece and the Mediterranean will be rising in the next years, the need for good practices will be crucial. This realization formed a key attribute of the CYCLADES Life project which sought to constitute a pilot case study, through which solutions and good practices for effective and sustainable MPA management would be developed and demonstrated.

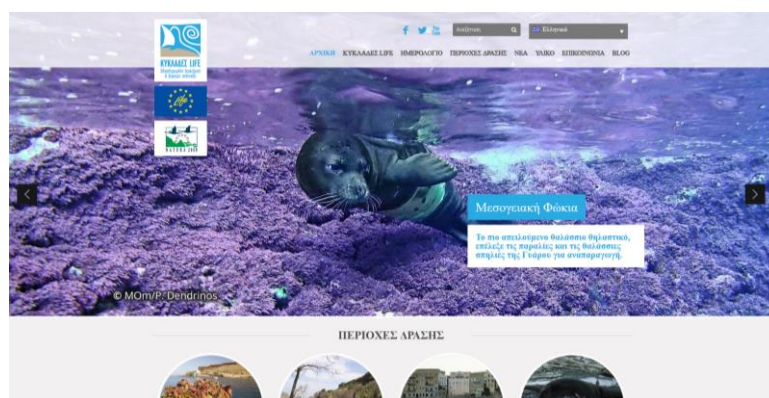
To fulfil the afore role, during the next years we will among others:

- Publish specific guidelines and best practice guides
- Present the results and the lessons learned in international fora
- Organize visits and workshops to demonstrate results
- Actively support other MPAs that wish to replicate our approaches

The following table summarizes the attributes of this workstream:

Dissemination and replication	
Scope and objective	To widely disseminate the example and the lessons learned of the CYCLADES Life
Enabling factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Experience of WWF Greece in disseminating information2. Active participation in WWF Mediterranean Marine Partnership and international network3. Willingness of conservation community to examine and adopt innovative approaches4. CYCLADES Life Partners willing and able to support this process5. Existence of a MAVA Foundation sponsored network of MPA projects in the Mediterranean
Risk management	Although the adoption of our approaches cannot be guaranteed, no specific important risk is identified.
Main operator(s)	WWF Greece
Other Partners	Tethys Institute, National Marine Research Centre, WWF Mediterranean offices, MAVA Foundation
Estimated cost	c. €15.000 p.a.
Secured funding	None

Communication



Following the conclusion of the LIFE funding, WWF Greece will continue to communicate the results and the actions of the project, as well as those of the after-LIFE activities described above. The main tools to be utilized in this course will, at least, include:

- Maintenance of the project's website for at least until 2023.
- Utilize the WWF Greece website to maintain a constant stream of news about the project's outcomes and the after-LIFE activities.
- Utilize WWF Greece social media (facebook, tweeter, Instagram, etc) for the same reason.
- Profile project activities and results within the WWF International network and through its communication channels.
- Keep close contact with local media of the Cyclades to keep local societies and stakeholders up to date with all developments in after LIFE activities

The following table summarizes the attributes of this workstream:

Dissemination and replication	
Scope and objective	To continue communicating the actions and results of the CYCLADES Life and maintain a flow of information regarding after LIFE activities
Enabling factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience of WWF Greece in communications and strong links with media community 2. Project already well profiled with media partners at the local and national level
Risk management	No risks identified
Main operator(s)	WWF Greece
Other Partners	CYCLADES Life partners
Estimated cost	c. €5.000 p.a.
Secured funding	WWF Greece has committed to finance this workstream

The after LIFE “ecosystem”

Summing the information laid above, the following table gives a concise overview of the after-LIFE “ecosystem”, presenting involved partners along with their potential/suggested roles and the level of their commitment (blue=committed, gray=engaged but not committed)

Partner	After LIFE workstreams					
	Collective management / MPA governance	Surveillance and enforcement	Research and monitoring	Local development / MPA funding	Local engagement	Dissemination and replication
Ministry of Environment						
Ministry of Culture						
Decentralized Authority of the Aegean						
Regional Government of South Aegean						
Municipality of Syros						
Municipality of Andros						
Hellenic Coast Guard						
WWF Greece						
Cyclades Development Agency						
Hellenic Marine Research Centre						
MOm						
Natural History Museum of Crete						
Hellenic Ornithological Society						
Cyclades Chamber of Commerce						
Local Fishers’ associations						
Harokopion University of Athens						
University of the Aegean						
Vertigo lab						
Impact Hub						
WWF Netherlands						
WWF Switzerland						

Conclusions

CYCLADES Life has been an innovative project that, despite the many hindrances faced, has produced important conservation results for the site of Gyaros and has laid strong foundations both for the continuation of activities and for the dissemination of valuable practices and lessons learned.

Even from the project's planning phase, it was evident to all involved partners –and primarily to WWF Greece as the leading partner- that the conservation of the Gyaros site would be a long term engagement of which the LIFE project would only be the start. For this reason, preparations for the after-LIFE period started early on during the project's lifespan. These preparations included the careful planning of activities, the soliciting of funders, the cultivation of relations with stakeholders and future partners and the profiling of the project within the conservation and scientific community.

At the closure of the project, we are found with strongly laid foundations for continuing this important conservation effort: Funds for the continuation of core activities have to a large extent been secured, members of the co-management committee are willing to continue their close collaboration, key partners are committed in continuing to contribute to the project goals and a wide ecosystem of stakeholders is observing and supporting this effort.

Although few certainties about the future exist, conditions are as fit as possible for the successful and viable continuation of necessary actions until our vision is fulfilled!