Governance Strategy for the Natura 2000 Network in the Marine Environment in Spain LIFE INTEMARES

Summary Document

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Coordinators
Óscar Esparza Alaminos, Beatriz Nieto Novoa y José Luis García Varas (WWF España).

Authors
Óscar Esparza Alaminos, Beatriz Nieto Novoa, José Luis García Varas (WWF España). Victoria González Vela, Silvia Guadix Montero (Fundación Biodiversidad). Pedro Noguera Méndez, María Semitiel García, José Antonio García Charton, Amelia Cánovas Muñoz, Jesús Enrique Argente García, Blanca Soro Mateo y Elisa Pérez de los Cobos Hernández (Universidad de Murcia).

Publication
Guillermo Prudencio Vergara

Layout
Otro tipo con gafas

Cover photo
Miguel Murcia

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WWF España
Gran Vía de San Francisco,8-D. 28005 Madrid

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Preface

Spain has a wealth of endless coastline and vast seas. From the migration corridor of the cetaceans of the Mediterranean to the deep inlets of Galicia's rías, the abundant waters of the underground canyons of Girona, our country is home to a fascinating diversityof life resources linked to the sea, coexisting with a flora and fauna unparalleled in Europe.

Marine conservation in Spain has taken an enormous step in recent years, with a great research effort that allows us to better ascertain the reality of Spain's waters, and which has contributed to a notable increase of protected marine species. There must be adequate management of these species, making their use and activities compatible with the wealth and diversity of our seas. **This management must also include extensive and multidisciplinary knowledge, which contributes to the adaptation and minimisation of the risk posed by climate change to protected marine species.**

The urgent need to curb and offset environmental deterioration faces the challenge of understanding the relationship we maintain with the biosphere, development and human well-being depend of the biosphere. Understanding this interaction is especially relevant in coastal areas, which **suffer threats like overexploitation of resources, destruction and fragmentation of ecosystems or pollution**. We are at a crucial moment, where many economic interests point directly to the see as an area of new opportunities. At the same time, Europe is urging us to put things in order and anticipate potential problems and conflicts.

To do that, the partners behind the LIFE IP INTEMARES project agree to undertake a participatory marine governance strategy, within the framework of the project, that aims to contribute to a change in the model, supporting efficient management of protected marine areas in Spain. This model highlights a paradigm shift in the way in which administrative relations are produced, with real and effective participation in different public and private sectors, allowing for management of resources in a more efficient socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way.

This documents has been drafted on a participatory basis, based on the visions and needs of the partners of the projects, the users and managers of the marine Natura 2000 Network in Spain. A collective and participatory process for the construction of this new paradigm, fit for the challenges faced as part of the conservation of the Natura 2000 network.

At a glance

Where we want to get to:

- Marine governance refers to the mechanisms, processes and rules for managing people and sectors and their different interests and concerns for the marine environment.
- There is strong demand for greater participation of all stakeholders in the management of Natura 2000 marine resources.
- The INTEMARES governance model came about from the shared vision of these interest groups on efficient participation, integration into the decision making process, transparency and accountability.
- A series of essential values that must permeate all actions, and the function that must deliver participative governance adapted to the reality of the territory.

How we've done it:

- Participation has been central to the entire process of creation of the strategy, from the collection of information to the definition of objectives, with the aim of incorporating a diversity of sensitivities on the management of protected marine areas in Spain.
- The process has 285 participants from all the marine demarcations, from 80 different entities.
- Seven spaces have been opened up for participation, with five face-to-face workshops around the country.

Where we are:

- Over 12% of Spain's seas are protected and the State's commitment is to bring this up to 30% by 2030.
- The management measures are still insufficient and inadequate to guarantee the conservation and protection of this protected area: only half of the Natura 2000 spaces in the marine environment have approved a management plan.
- The pending challenge is to achieve efficient, innovative and participative management that guarantees care for these spaces with involvement of the local population.
- To achieve it, there exists a broad regulatory framework and new legal frameworks such as co-management and marine custody, although it will be necessary to improve coordination between administration and within them.

How the situation can be improved:

- The contributions gathered have allowed us to specify four objectives of the Governance Strategy, with nine lines of action over the short, medium and long term, developed through actions, tools or alternatives to management.
- A model of the Monitoring Plan has been defined to guarantee compliance with the strategy and the improvement of governance of marine protected areas.
- The INTEMARES governance model is dynamic and adaptable: it will be put into practice through pilot projects at least five spaces of the Natura 2000 marine networks to incorporate learnings and potential improvements.

The four objectives of the Governance Strategy

1 Optimise the existing governance structures to improve the efficiency of planning and management of MPAs.

2 Complete innovative management of the sea developing the regulatory elements or relating to governance.

3 Design and put in place participation processes in central spheres of the management of the MPA.

4 Promote the development of the management capacities of the MPAs.

Where we want to go: towards efficient governance of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment

The great extension and diversity of the marine spaces that make up the Natura 2000 network in Spain make governance a real challenge. Issues like the non-existence of private property, the distribution of competencies or the growing number of activities with specific regulation make this task difficult. But correct governance is vital to achieve management that ensures the conservation of habitats and species of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment. At the same time, we face prior challenges like the design of coherent and efficient management plans, integration of different sectoral marine policies, or the implementation of the Priority Action Framework for the financing of the Natura 2000 network in Spain (PAF) up to 2027, which should be taken into account when it comes to undertaking this strategy.

Shared vision of governance: values, functions and structures

Marine governance refers to the mechanisms, processes and rules for managing people and sectors and their different interests and concerns for the marine environment.

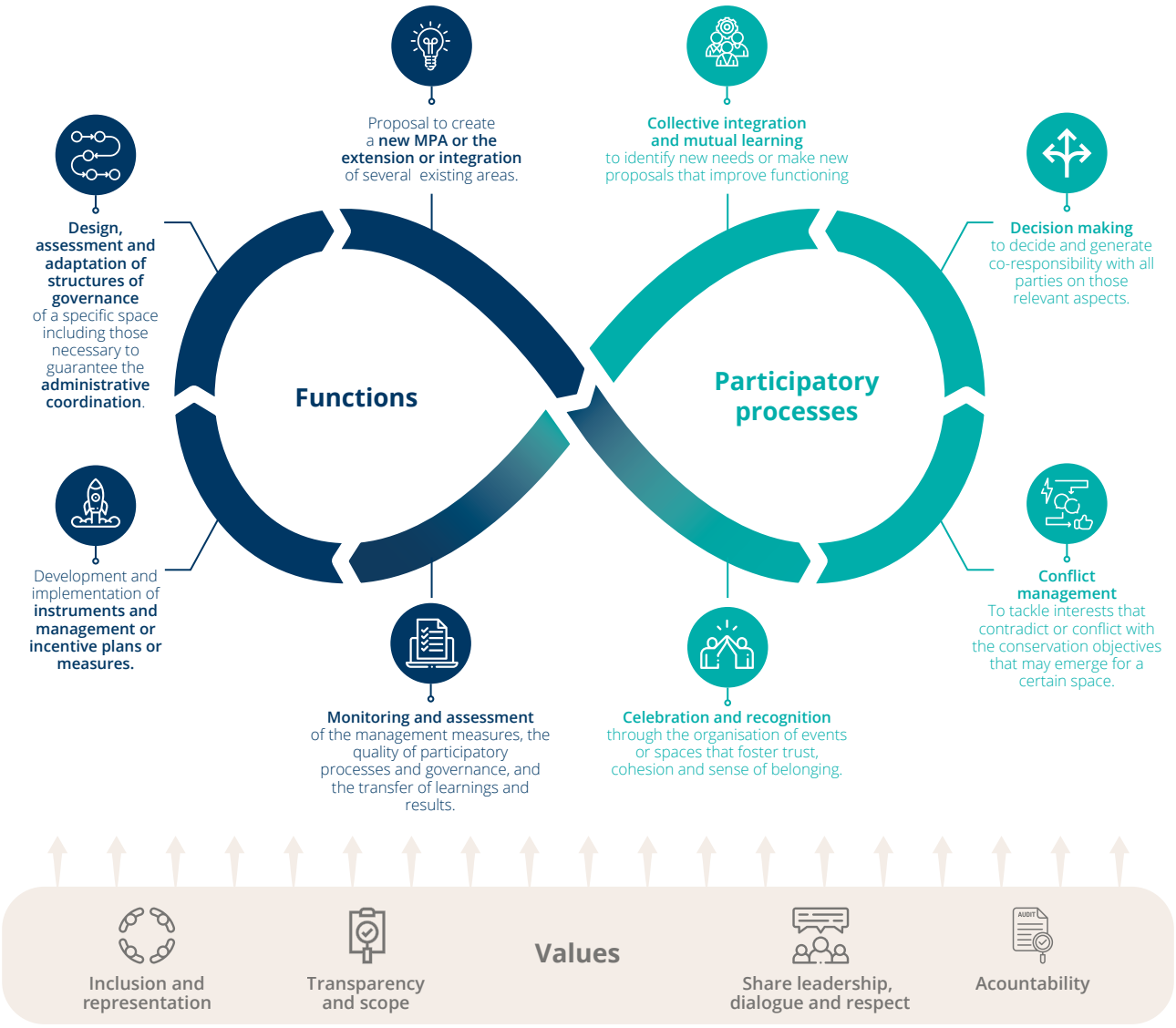
To attempt to define the principles that guide the governance of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment, a workshop was held between the partners of the INTEMARES project, which form a diverse and representative sample of stakeholders: administration, science, NGO conservationists and the fishing sector.

The workshop debated the values and functions of the governance model promoted by INTEMARES in relation to four aspects: efficient participation,

Integration in the decision making process, transparency and accountability, with the aim of reaching a shared vision.

The governance model has been defined on a foundation of values that permeate all actions. At local level, it is developed on the basis of **governance bodies and structures** created according to the needs of each territory which performs a series of **essential functions** through **participatory processes** for four main principles.

Figure 1. LIFE IP INTEMARES governance model



Source: Authors' own

Over the course of the drafting of this strategy, there has been strong demand for participation among all stakeholder groups in the management of Natura 2000 network. There are calls for more horizontal decisions incorporating local knowledge, integrating different opinions and interests: ultimately, a model of governance in more open marine protected areas. This would make fairer, more inclusive and smarter planning and management of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment.

However, on the day, there are certain limitations (time, budgetary, etc.) to achieve this efficient participation. In the framework of this strategy, a Guide to Participatory Processes which seeks to facilitate this important task, with the framework of the work, proposals and tools that can be extrapolated to any protected space.

How we have done: a collective and participative process

To achieve a change of paradigm in marine governance, we need the involvement of those who live by it, navigate it, fish and manage actions every day. That's why this strategy is based on the participation of several hundred people, of all marine demarcations of different social and economic sectors with ranging sensibilities and points of view on how to manage protected marine spaces. The collective work or managers and socio-economic stakeholders has guided the entire process, from the initial diagnosis to the final proposals.

Methodological aspects of the Strategy

In addition to the dozen participating spaces, like research and consultation workshops or online surveys, research tools such as legislative and regulatory analysis and case studies and interviews have also been used.

Figure 2. Participatory process data

Source: Authors' own

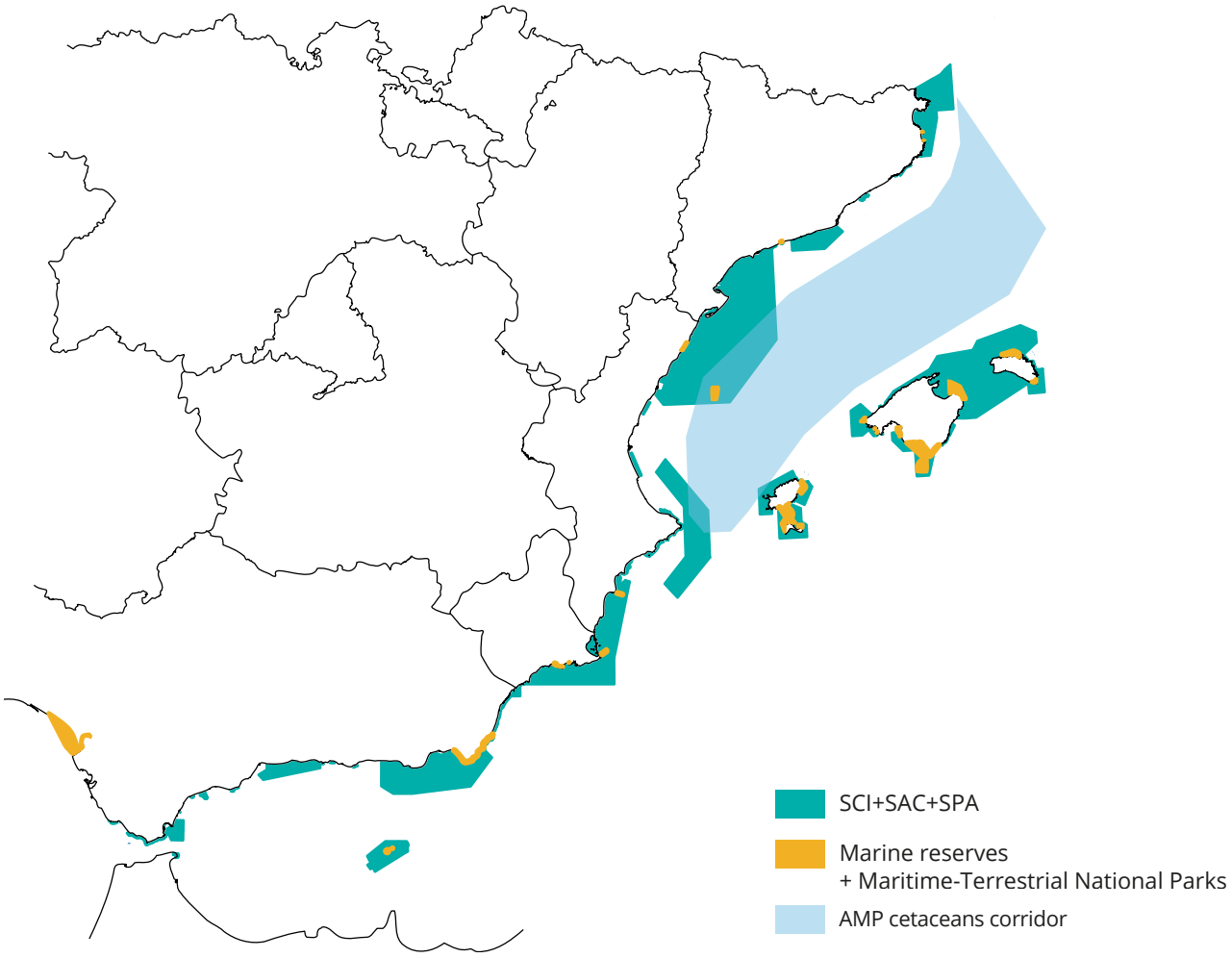
Where we are: the pending challenge of marine conservation

The marine protected areas have seen unprecedented expansion over recent years, with the commitment of the Government of Spain to cover one third of our seas by 2030. Achieving efficient, innovative and participative management that enables us to meet for conservation targets for this enormous Natura 2000 surface area in the marine environment is the main challenge facing Spain with respect to the conservation of the ocean. The good news is that there exist legal tools and public interest in achieving this.

Scope

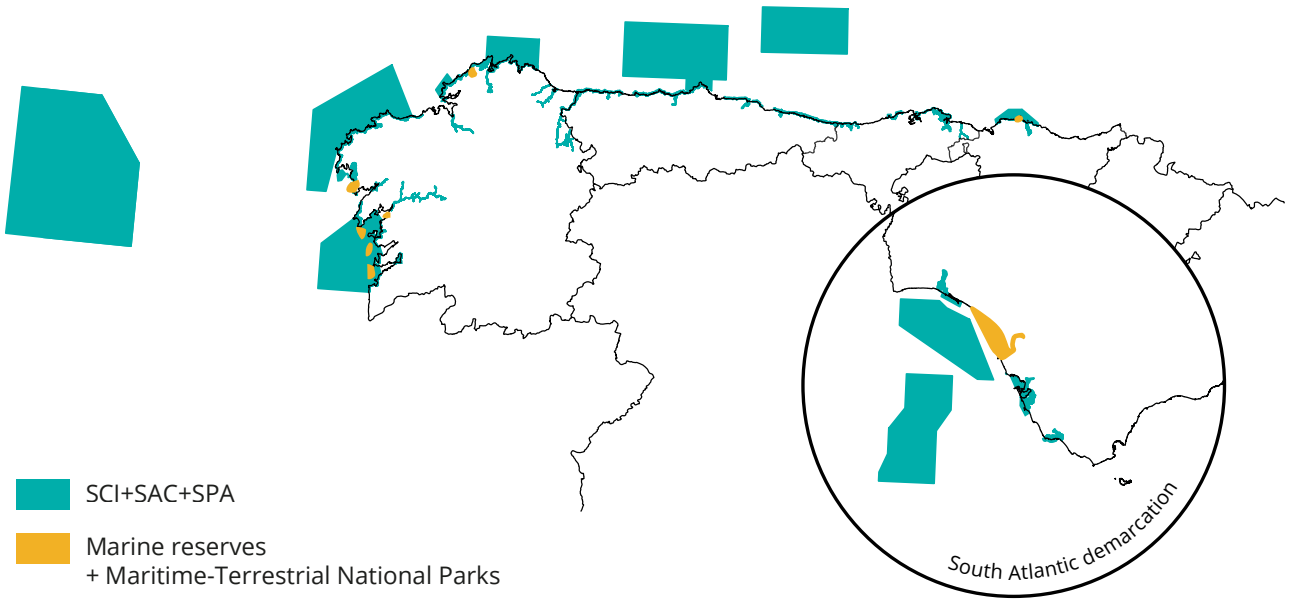
Spanish waters encompass more than one million square kilometres, with a singularity, complexity and importance that makes Spain the European country with the greatest marine biodiversity. Over 12% of Spain's waters are protected, and the commitment is to reach 30% by 2030.

Figure 3. MPAs under the General State Administration in the MMED Region



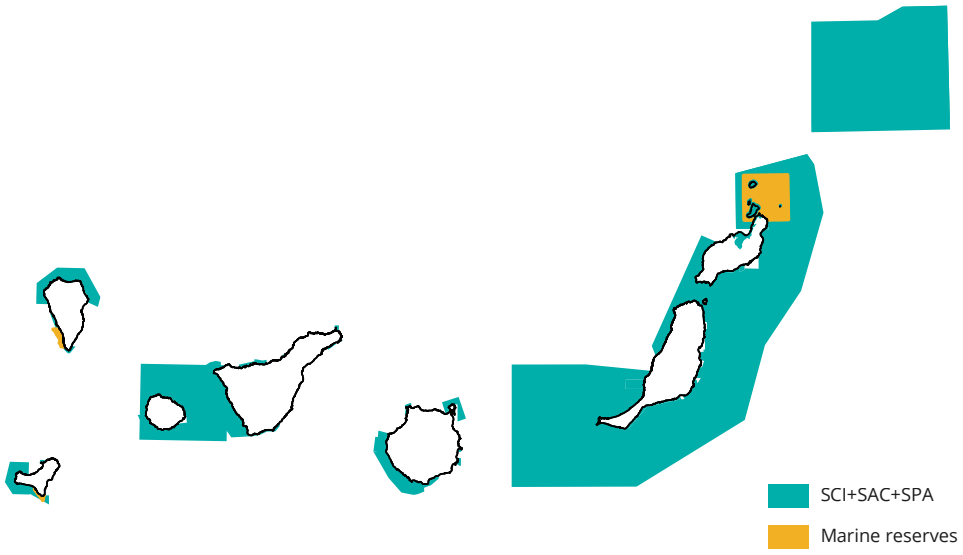
Source: MITECO

Figure 4. MPAs under the General State Administration in the MATL Region



Source:MITECO

Figure 5. MPAs under the General State Administration in the MATL Region

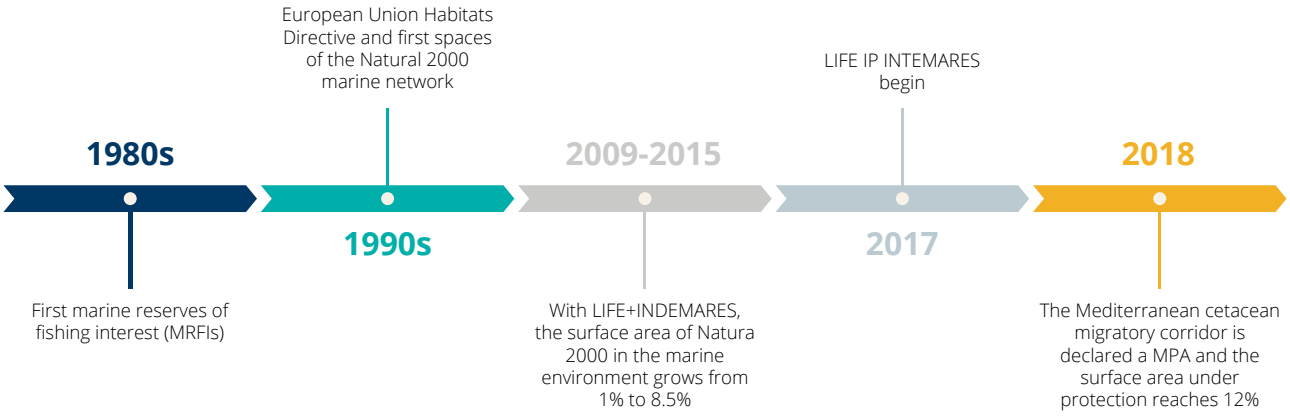


Source: MITECO

This project was created in 2017 and over its 8 years of duration it aims to contribute to a new management model for marine protected areas in Spain, driving a coherent and efficient management, with the active participation of the sectors involved and the research as basic tools for decision making.

With an innovative programme of actions linked to research, conservation, monitoring and supervision, governance and training and environmental communication awareness, LIFE IP INTEMARES is the biggest marine conservation project in Europe.

Figure 6. Timeline of marine protection in Spain



Source: Authors' own

Legal framework of marine governance

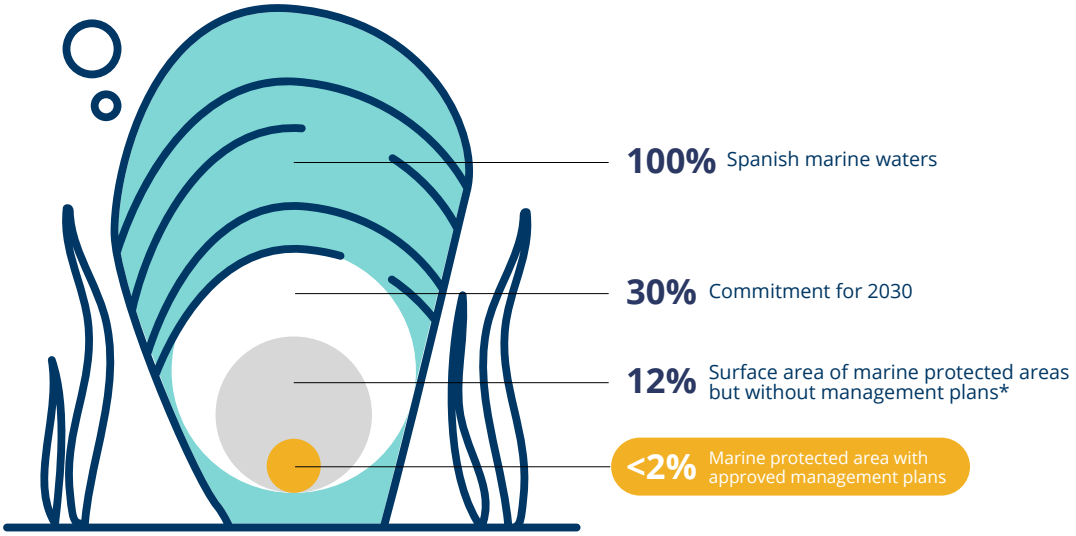
Marine governance in Spain involves a real conundrum of rules, competencies and interests. From the current framework analysis, and the opinions collected in the participative workshops, the task of improving coordination between the different levels of the administration and the different sectoral needs is a clear one.

The legal framework includes ample regulatory context, with national and European legislation and international agreements, overlapping competencies between the General State Administration and the Autonomous Communities; a legal commitment to citizen participation; and innovative tools to foster this social involvement, co-management and marine custody.

Planning instruments and management of the Natura 2000 Network and other MPAs

The Natura 2000 Network is key to governance of the sea due to the enormous surface area under protection, shared between the Autonomous Communities and the Central Government. The network encompasses all social and economic sectors and overlaps with multiple regulations, including land-sea interaction. However, the approved measures remain insufficient or inadequate to guarantee good ecological condition of the species and the habitats defined in the Natura 2000 Network.

Figure 7. Marine protected area



Source: Nature data bank (MITECO) . Note: * The protected surface area includes: Protected Natural Spaces, Natura 2000 Network, Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar, SPAMI and OSPAR.

Table 1 Summary of Natura 2000 network marine spaces the competency of Autonomous Communities and the General Government, total and Management Plan.

Competent Administration	No. of spaces		No. SPA		No. SCI		No. SAC	
	total	with MP	total	with MP	total	with MP	total	with MP
Andalusia	24	20	6	6	4	0	14	14
Asturias	11	11	5	5	0	0	6	6
Balearic Island	54	8	13	2	35	0	6	6
Canary Islands	6	5	2	1	0	0	4	4
Cantabria	7	6	1	0	0	0	6	6
Catalonia	18	18	7	7	0	0	11	11
Galicia	28	28	9	9	0	0	19	19
Region of Murcia	8	3	5	0	0	0	3	3
Basque Country	3	3	1	1	0	0	2	2
Valencia	10	0	5	0	5	0	0	0
Autonomous City of Ceuta	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Autonomous City of Melilla	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
MITECO-DGBByD	99	33	46	0	20	0	33	33
MITECO-OAPN	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	1
TOTALS	**272**	**138**	**101**	**32**	**65**	**0**	**106**	**106**

Source: MITECO 2020 | MP: Management Plan

51% of Natura 2000 marine sites have management plans in place.

Obstacles to overcome: a participatory diagnosis

There a numerous barriers to advancing towards efficient governance of marine protected areas, as a way of taking excessively vertical decisions, or coordination between administrations with certain fissures. But the political landscape, the will of managers and the desire to participate on the part of socio-economic stakeholders make for a more favourable climate than ever for this paradigm shift.

Figure 8. Where we want to go: Strengths and weaknesses for efficient governance of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment

Weaknesses:

- The complexity of the MPAs and the different stakeholders, with conflicting interests.
- Vertical management of the protected area, with very little participation and influence of different stakeholders and local communities.
- Insufficient coordination between administrations.
- Inexistence of management plans or only plans on role, with no control or monitoring of the measures.
- Overlapping of different protection types and management types in the same area.
- Gaps in participation remain, with processes that do not always adapt o the stakeholders.
- Lack of communication on N2000 with sectors, users and citizens in general.

Strengths:

- A firm commitment of the State to foster marine protection, with shared objectives with the EU.
- European policies like the Aarhus Convention or the Marine Strategies, among others, explicitly incorporate participation in the transpositions of legislation into the national legal system.
- Every day there are more participative processes under way in different spheres.
- The Network of Marine Protected Areas of Spain (RAMPE), which should be managed with minimum common criteriadefined between the General Government and the Autonomous Communities.
- The opportunity to apply to the sea the Custody of the land, a model introduced in the Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Act.
- The administrations are increasingly more permeable for more participative governance thanks to previous success stories.
- There are significant opportunities for financing.

Source: Authors' own

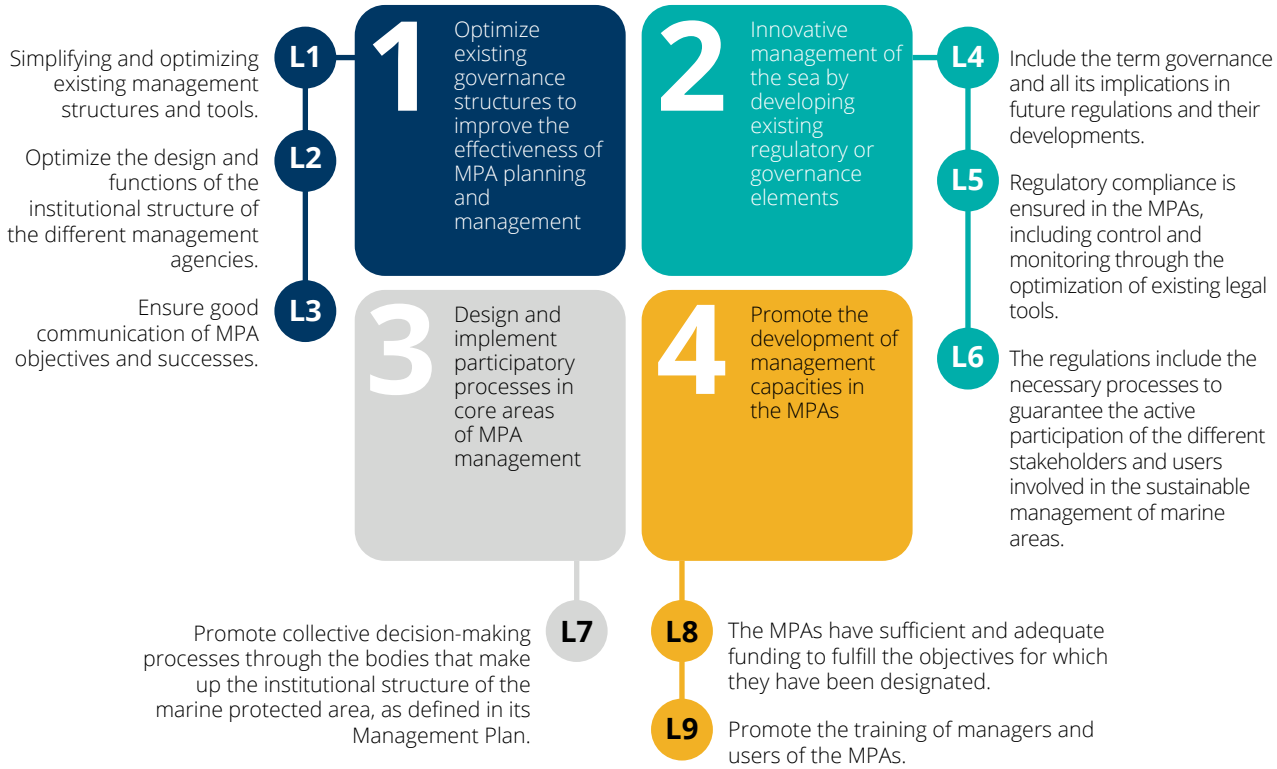
How the situation can be improved: a roadmap for marine governance

The implementation of this strategy will contribute to a management model for marine protected areas that is efficient and equitable, adaptable and resilient: a model for Natura 2000 network in the marine environment that is up to the challenges of the present. A number of objectives and an exhaustive Monitoring Plan that will allow for the course to be set and maintained over the course of this difficult journey.

Objectives

Based on demands identified over the course of the participatory processes, four objectives have been identified for the improvement of governance with a series of lines of action in the short, medium and long-term options that will be developed through actions, tools and management alternatives. The Governance Strategy proposes three levels of work and organisation, from local level to the General Government and defines the expected results and indicators of compliance that will be evaluated in the Monitoring Plan.

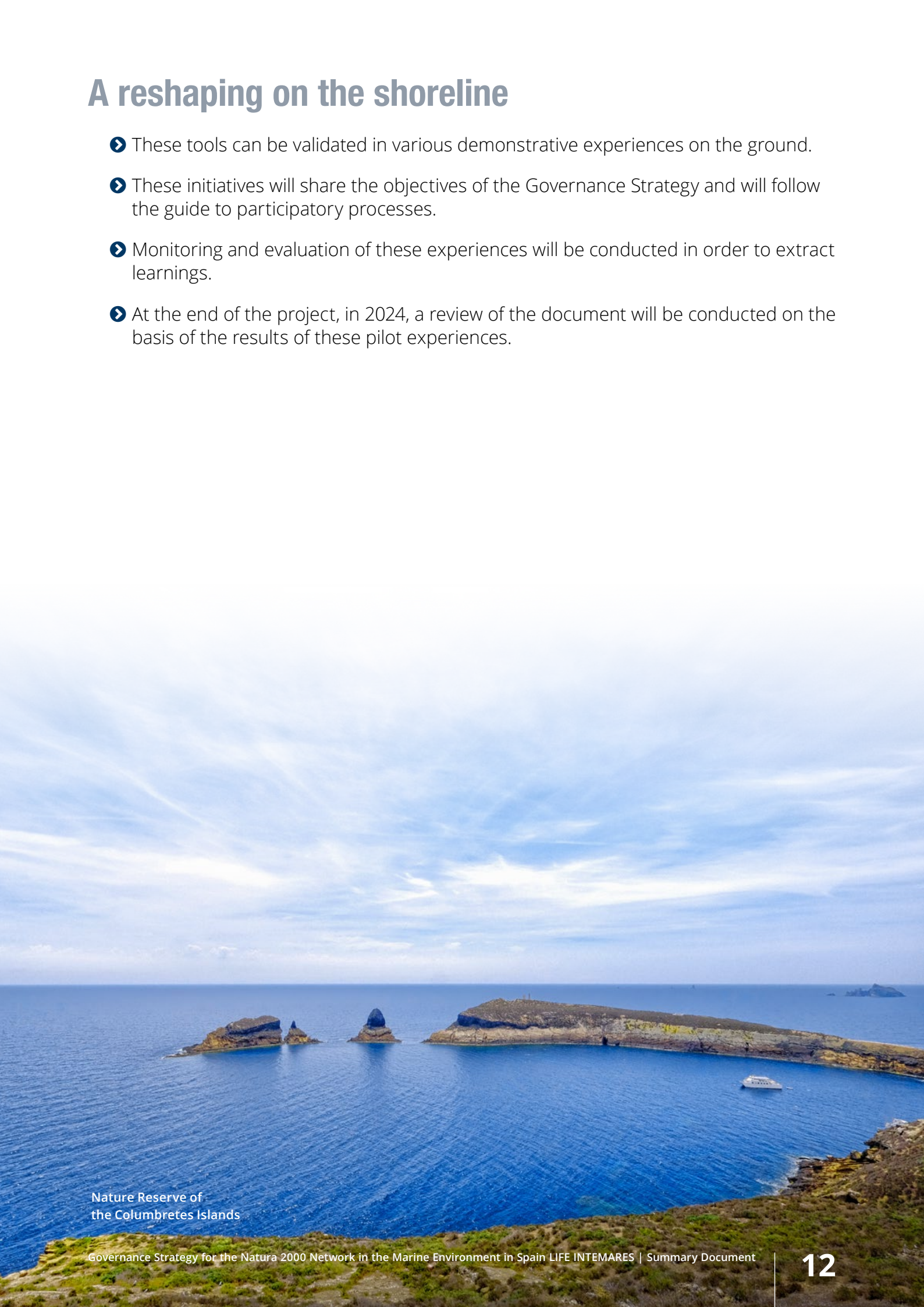
Figure 9. Objectives and lines of action



Source: Authors' own

A reshaping on the shoreline

- These tools can be validated in various demonstrative experiences on the ground.
- These initiatives will share the objectives of the Governance Strategy and will follow the guide to participatory processes.
- Monitoring and evaluation of these experiences will be conducted in order to extract learnings.
- At the end of the project, in 2024, a review of the document will be conducted on the basis of the results of these pilot experiences.



Nature Reserve of
the Columbretes Islands

How to stay on course: the Monitoring Plan

Monitoring is essential to guarantee the quality of the process and measure the progress and efficiency of the measures, allowing for them to be adapted based on the specifics of each territory. A Monitoring Plan will be drafted to periodically evaluate Governance Strategy in general and for each marine protected area of the pilot projects chosen.

What elements must be evaluated?

- Budgetary capacity.
- Management personnel.
- Local regulations.
- Geographic range.
- Population.
- Type of regime.
- Organizations.
- Rules of use.
- Standards and strategies.
- Structure of the network.
- Monitoring.
- Sanctions.
- Incentives.
- Capacity and environmental training.

SEE COMPLETE DOCUMENT

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Gran Vía de San Francisco,8-D. 28005 Madrid | wwf.es