

## THE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership benefits from a strong governance structure that aggregates marine turtle-focused NGOs, research entities, pan-Mediterranean organisations and Marine Protected Area (MPA) managers, established during Phase I and animated throughout Phase II. This is a **primary strength** of the project, bringing together collaborators from the across the Mediterranean region.

The partnership is composed of **9 direct partners**



**MEDASSET**  
Mediterranean Association  
to Save the Sea Turtles



Mediterranean  
Action Plan  
Barcelona  
Convention



PHASE I & II FUNDED BY:



## OUR MISSION

Thriving populations of marine turtles  
at sea and on land supported by a  
recognised and strong partnership.

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Conservation of  
Marine Turtles  
in the Mediterranean Region

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# SEA TURTLES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Three sea turtle species frequent the Mediterranean. The loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) nest in the region, and the huge leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) is an occasional visitor, mainly in search for food.

Over the last 200 years, human activities have tipped the scales against the survival of marine turtles. Anthropogenic impacts, including bycatch, loss of nesting habitat, marine pollution and climate change all continue to have devastating impacts on marine turtle populations, threatening species survival. Sea turtles are flagship species of the seas that contribute greatly to the balance of marine ecosystems. Marine turtles are critical to ecosystem health, and hold significant ecological, social and economic value, with roles including maintaining healthy seagrass beds, providing key habitat for other marine life, balancing marine food webs and facilitating nutrient cycling.

Moreover, marine turtles are sentinel indicators of climate change, as sporadic nesting in cooler beaches indicates. With recent conservation efforts, the minimum number of nests in the Mediterranean is estimated at 8,000 for loggerhead turtles and 2,000 for green turtles per year <sup>(1)</sup>. However, populations remain impacted with estimates in the region as low as 260,000 and 810,000 for green and loggerhead turtles, respectively.

Impacts to marine turtles affects us all. Through their effective conservation, we will preserve ecological integrity, protect biodiversity, increase resilience to climate change, and safeguard social, cultural and economic well-being throughout the Mediterranean:



A loggerhead turtle hatching © DEKAMER

**The future of marine turtles will be determined by the implementation of current and future effective conservation strategies and actions.**

<sup>(1)</sup> Casale P, Broderick AC, Camiñas JA, Cardona L and others (2018) Mediterranean sea turtles: current knowledge and priorities for conservation and research. *Endang Species Res* 36:229-267.

## CONSERVATION OF MARINE TURTLES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION PHASE III

The project, Conservation of Marine Turtles in the Mediterranean Region, was established in 2017 through a strong and collaborative partnership of nine organisations, acting at local, national, and regional levels across the Mediterranean, throughout 13 Countries. The project was funded by the MAVA foundation during phase one and two and in 2023, will enter its third phase. **This phase will continue to address threats to marine turtles, improving knowledge and conservation strategies whilst building national capacity for the effective conservation of marine turtles.**

### How will the project phase III achieve this?

#### **Pillar 1 > Marine turtle monitoring and research: Advancing the latest science and filling knowledge gaps**

The project will advance monitoring practices for marine turtles and their habitats, identify critical habitats, including the identification of **Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTA)**, and develop conservation responses to key threats through science-based management.

This will be achieved through the continued monitoring of marine turtles on both land and at sea to guide management issues, including the use of satellite tracking of turtles as well as locating key foraging and overwintering locations and filling knowledge gaps for monitoring and managing marine turtles within, and outside, the Partnership.



June 2018 © WWF Turkey, Photo by Emrhan Karamuk

#### **Pillar 2 > Threat reduction: Challenging, minimising, and mitigating threats to marine turtles**

Threats to marine turtles will be further identified, minimised, and mitigated against through a suite of tools being developed and implemented at local, national and regional levels to conserve and protect critical habitats. This will encourage area-based management to maintain and enhance marine turtle populations in the Mediterranean.

Moreover, the project will establish unified and scientifically operational national stranding networks, identify hotspots for threats and pressures to marine turtles, assist countries to align their National Actions Plans and support obligations under regional policy frameworks including the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), Post-2020 SAPBIO, EU Habitats Directive 92/42/EEC and Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 14.

#### **Pillar 3 > Expanding the marine turtle community: Building capacity and effective communication**

Capacities to collect critical data, monitor marine turtles, and respond to threats and impacts will be increased, producing a critical network of conscious stakeholders, practitioners, and citizens. Technical capacity will be built amongst the Partnership, ensuring a strong, pro-active and well-equipped partnership for the successful conservation of marine turtles. The project will also raise the capacity and strengthen exchanges between stakeholder operation networks and rescue centres whilst maintaining, and expanding, communication on the project's marine turtle conservation efforts. Awareness raising activities will aim to engage local communities and the young generation, raising the plight of marine turtles, advocating for marine protection.