



The Interreg Med Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform

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The Mediterranean Sea is a site of high biodiversity importance, in the last decades is in a constant threat by several anthropogenic pressures, as coastal degradation, pollution including marine litter and increasing pace of climate related stress. The Interreg Med Biodiversity Protection Community featured by the PANACeA project represents thematic projects on various aspects of Mediterranean biodiversity. These are funded by the Interreg Med programme with the aim to establish a community to interconnect main parties concerned by the management and protection of natural areas and habitats in the Mediterranean. Such biodiversity community intends to share, through a knowledge platform, best practices and know-how, focusing on the management of protected areas to sustain healthy natural ecosystems in the region. The implementation of the Interreg Med Biodiversity Protection Knowledge platform is based on communication among PANACeA partners, led by the University of Malaga with nine projects - the main users and contributors to populate the platform. It is being built to capitalize recent and current relevant initiatives, using outputs shaped in the form of data (spatial and tabular), reports (technical, political recommendations, ...) and other material of interest as identified. The structure of the MED platform is modelled following suggestions by the biodiversity community main actors and considering the set of key functionalities and tools to satisfy their needs as final users. Among them: I) a search interface for available inputs (data, maps, reports); II) metadata information with details on each input; III) data preview to allow users to previsualize information; IV) access to data to download if no other restrictions apply; and a V) communication service to share requests or updates among interested users. Consequently, a metadata catalogue was identified among the key tools that the platform should include, to support the creation and publishing of metadata following the ISO19115/119/110 standards for spatial data. Such catalogue would guarantee the use of descriptive keywords from already defined and widely used thesaurus (e.g. GEMET). Furthermore, an interactive map viewer which supports OGC services (WMS, WFS, WCS) is used to ensure the interoperability with other geoportals. The Interreg Med Biodiversity Protection Community is structured in three working groups supported by PANACeA partners. The groups focus on subjects related to protected area management, sustainable use of natural resources, and integrated ecosystem monitoring. This structure is used in the development of the platform to support and instruct the processes of dataset standardization and the production of suitable information to describe the data as metadata compliant to defined standards, namely the INSPIRE directive. The harmonization of inputs to well-known standards is essential to access, use, and manipulate results and generate new products to feed the platform, envisaged as a long-term capitalisation tool for sharing evidence related to Mediterranean biodiversity and to disseminate this knowledge among MED biodiversity protection community partners and beyond.