



Mediterranean
Action Plan
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SPAMIday
15 April

INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



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List of Acronyms

APE	Association for preserving the Environment
MPA	Marine Protected Area
SPA/RAC	Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre
SPAMI	Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance
TCNR	Tyre Coast Nature Reserve

Executive Summary

The mini-project "INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS " was implemented by the Association for Preserving the Environment (APE) in collaboration with Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR). The project targets the diving, school, and fishers' sectors.

It aimed to increase:

- *The visibility of TCNR.*
- *The awareness with a focus on marine biodiversity protection and conservation.*
- *Sustainable tourism.*

It was an opportunity for the involvement of local stakeholders in Tyre, especially kids, students, fishers, divers, and women in the local community, in the reserve's activities. Within the project, schools visits for TCNR have been organized, allowing the valorization of TCNR resources and as a way of promotion and increasing the visibility of the reserve. Accordingly, divers were also involved in the reserve activity through diving sessions, allowing them to improve their knowledge of marine habitats and associated biodiversity. Fishers were also trained to protect and conserve marine species with particular interest. Also, women of the local community were trained on some environmental handmade as an opportunity for women's involvement in the activities of TCNR.

This mini project is a good and efficient step in helping the reserve aim to involve the local community as an important step for implementing activities of the updated management Plan of TCNR.

1. Introduction

The SPAMI Day, a regional celebration of Mediterranean marine conservation and protected areas, was set up by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their COP 22 (Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021), and is officially celebrated on 15 April of each year.

The objective of the SPAMI Day is to promote the List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs), in other words, exceptional marine areas managed in an exemplary manner, and more broadly, to raise awareness about ocean conservation.

The theme of SPAMI Day 2023 focused on the co-management and involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in managing Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs). By selecting this theme, the aim was to value and encourage all the dynamics involving different stakeholders within SPAMIs, which contribute to transformative change towards preserving and restoring ecosystems and living in harmony with nature.

As part of the third edition of the SPAMI Twinning Programme, funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, SPA/RAC provided support to Mediterranean Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in implementing activities to celebrate the SPAMI Day and promote the conservation of marine biodiversity across six SPAMIs, in collaboration with their respective managers.

In this context, the mini project "INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS" was proposed and implemented by the Association for Preserving the Environment (APE) in collaboration with Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR).

This mini project aimed to increase the involvement of the local community of Tyre (especially fishers, divers, women, scouts, and students) in the activities of Tyre Coast Nature Reserve. It will focus on:

- Expanding the visibility of the reserve and increasing the awareness related to the protection and conservation of the reserve's natural, ecological, and historical resources through organizing field visits for the reserve.
- Increasing the capacity building of the main local community targeted through a training program based on handmade creation.
- Increase and valorise the reserve resources through the works with fishers, and divers.
- Increasing the ecotourism values of the reserve by the involvement of divers in the activities of the reserve.

Finally, this mini project will help implement the activities proposed in the updated Management Plan of TCNR (2023-2028), focusing on the objective "local community involvement".

2. Presentation of the Association for Preserving the Environment

The Association for Preserving the Environment (APE) was declared in 1997. Accordingly, APE was declared a partner of Tyre Coast Nature Reserve since the declaration of the reserve in 1998. Since then, APE has been involved in many activities (from different sectors) in Tyre, aiming to improve the city's socio-economic situation.

As main activities, APE contributes:

- To increase the knowledge of the local community (especially fishers and students) through awareness activities dealing with biodiversity and environmental issues.
- In some environmental activities such as the reforestation of a big part of Tyre, many beach and water cleaning campaigns, and offering bins to the municipality of Tyre.
- Capacity building through offering opportunities for students to follow their university studies through environmental projects and help them to reach their objectives.
- To valorise the values of TCNR through organizing field visits for students
- To increase environmental awareness by targeting the kiosks installed in the tourist zone of the reserve

Recently, APE has been working on implementing the ecotourism activities proposed by TCNR through working with hotels and restaurants in Tyre by:

- Increasing the visibility of the reserve
- Increasing environmental awareness (with a particular focus on plastic)
- Changing behaviour through plastic mitigation action (encouraging the single-use of plastics)

Finally, APE, with its collaboration with the municipality of Tyre and Tyre Coast Nature Reserve, is participating and encouraging in taking decisions for the protection and conservation of Tyre resources, especially environmental ones.

3. Dedicated Team for the Mini Project

For this project, APE collaborated with TCNR.

Ali BADREDDINE is the manager of TCNR and the best person for implementing the project activities. Dr. Ali BADREDDINE, as a marine researcher, was responsible for organizing:

- Students visit the reserve
- Training local community (especially women) to the reserve
- Preparing and designing scientific documents for fishers and divers
- Redaction of reports
- Diving, and following the trip with fishers

The communication part was given to Mr. Bilal Kashmar, who was responsible for the communication tools:

- Taking photos
- Creating videos

All the activities were implemented in collaboration with Tyre Coast Nature Reserve and the Municipality of Tyre.

4. The Mini Project

It has been well noticed during the years that one of the weaknesses of Tyre Coast Nature Reserve is the involvement of the local community in the reserve activities.

In this context, APE, through this mini project, aims:

- Valorizing and promoting the natural, ecological, cultural, archaeological, and historical resources of TCNR through the involvement of stakeholders in TCNR activities.
- Increasing the awareness to protect and conserve marine biodiversity, with a special focus on sea turtles
- Capacity building through increasing the knowledge of fishers and divers on the marine biodiversity in Tyre waters

In this context, the mini project proposed focused on:

1- Enhance the involvement of local stakeholders, especially students/fishers/divers, in the activities of TCNR

Activity 1.1. (targeting students): Organize school visits (touching different educational degrees) to the reserve, with a special focus on the sea turtle rescue center in TCNR, including environmental activities:

- Environmental games.
- Increasing awareness of sea turtles is an important step for implementing the actions proposed in the National Action Plan for Protecting and Conserving Sea Turtles in Lebanon.
- Create an educational story of the marine and coastal biodiversity.

Activity 1.2. (targeting fishers): Organize training sessions for fishers on techniques related to releasing accidentally caught marine species, with particular interest, especially dolphins, sharks, and sea turtles, as an essential step to increase citizen-science and the excellent establishment of the sea turtle stranding network in Lebanon.

Activity 1.3. (targeting divers): Training session to increase the techniques of divers to recognize and valorize the resources of TCNR (as an important step to improve the ecotourism action of TCNR).

Activity 1.4 (targeting local community): Train a group of women from the local community on developing handmade items (respecting the environmental aspect) produced in the MPA.

2- Increase the visibility of the reserve:

Activity. 2.1. Develop/ Design brochures on the values of TCNR. Act. 2.2. Develop/ Design environmental and educational games for students and kids. Act. 2.3. Creating videos focusing on TCNR resources and values for promotion with a special focus on main species (E.g., sea turtles, *Cystoseira* forests, *Cymodocea nodosa*).

5. Activity Results

Based on the objectives and activities of the project, the results were described as follow:

Objective 1: Enhance the involvement of local stakeholders, especially students/fishers/divers, in the activities of TCNR.

Activity (Act) 1.1. (targeting students): A visit of 130 students from an average of 13-17 years old from four different schools from Tyre was organized in TCNR.

During the schools visit, a field visit of TCNR has been done. And students enjoyed the ecological resources of the reserve, and the sea turtle's expedition. Students also played with some environmental and educational games prepared and designed by the PM of the project. They also participated in a draw competition where the three best drawings were chosen, and the winners gained a beautiful gift (e.g., a small budget of 10 Euros/ or valuable handmade bags or turtle maquette). Handmade gifts and drawing equipment were distributed for free to all the students. After the activity, students were invited to lunch in TCNR by APE. Accordingly, photos and videos have been made.

Date	Schools	Number of students	Average of Age	Link for videos and photos
15 Avril 2023	Afaq Schools	22		
15 Avril 2023	Sader School	31		
16 Avril 2023	Tyre School	26		
17 Avril 2023	Jaafariyeh School	50		

It has been recommended to:

- Organize more visits for students
- Continue with this activity to motivate and increase the student's knowledge as an essential step for future generations.
- Thinking of integrating environmental education in schools
- More cooperation with TCNR

Activity 1.2. (targeting fishers): During this activity, the APE team, led by its project manager, prepared some brochures (related to the importance of citizen-science-marine biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species-and Methodology to release endangered sea turtles) and distributed them to fishers from Tyre. During the distribution of the brochures, the APE team led by its project Manager talked to fishers and increased the visibility of the reserve and its importance. It has also been worked on improving the awareness of reducing illegal fishing methods (especially dynamites) and plastics.

Under this activity, ten trips with fishers have been done. The trip focuses on the importance of cleaning tire waters and increasing awareness to reduce the use of plastics.

It has also been focused on the fact that TCNR is the main operational center in Tyre for any environmental issue.

It has been recommended:

- To work more on the involvement of fishers in the monitoring activities
- The importance of declaring the loose of nets by the fishers
- Help the fishers by training and involving them in TCNR ongoing projects.
- The importance of contacting Tyre Coast Nature Reserve and especially the national expert in case of accidentally catching a flag species.

Date of the activity: 8/5/23-9/5/23-1/6/2023-10/06/23

Location of the activity: Tyre Port

Activity 1.3. (targeting divers): During this activity, APE organized three diving sessions for the reserve team with Lebanon Diving Center, led by its director and Ph.D. Marine Biologist Dr. Ali BADREDDINE to increase the knowledge of Tyre divers on the important marine ecosystems and their associated biodiversity. It is an important step for the ecotourism activities. Diver and coach instructors have been trained to recognize essential ecosystems and flag species around Tyre Coast Nature Reserve and Tyre waters. Some prepared brochures have been distributed for free to divers and diving centers in Tyre. Link for photos:

It has been recommended:

- Focus more on diving within the TCNR area
- Increasing the knowledge of divers, especially related to marine biodiversity
- Cooperate more with TCNR for sustainable tourism practices.
- Increase the income of both TCNR and the Diving center through a clear collaboration

Date of the activity: 8/5/23-9/5/23-1/6/2023-10/06/23

Location of the activity: Tyre Port

Activity 1.4 (targeting local community): During this activity, one training session for scouts' women of different ages and from Tyre was organized, and an international expert from Sri LANKA trained them in some environmental homemade (e.g., accessories, drawing on bags, creating handmade objects). Trainers participated in the handmade activities where many items were used, and some handmade equipment was distributed for free to all the participants. The event ends with a familial lunch.

It has been recommended:

- The necessity to follow up with such initiatives
- More cooperation with TCNR
- Offering more training and opportunity for women
- Increase the involvement of scouts in TCNR activities

Date of the activity: 10/06/23

Location of the activity: Tyre Coast Nature Reserve

Objective 2. Increase the visibility of the reserve • Act. 2.1. Develop/ Design brochures on the values of TCNR. • Act. 2.2. Develop/ Design environmental and educational games for students and kids. • Act. 2.3. Creating videos focusing on TCNR resources and values for promotion with a special focus on main species

Within this objective, the project Manager, PM Dr. Ali BADREDDINE, in collaboration with the communication officer, develop the following:

- Brochures about the natural resources of the reserve.
- Environmental and educational games.

In addition, a video of the reserve's natural resources has been created.

All these communication tools were used accordingly during the implementation of the activities.

6. Conclusion

Implementing the project activities shows the importance of TCNR as the main environmental operational center in TYre. In addition, it shows the necessity to follow up with these activities, with a special focus on kids.

The importance of awareness targeting fishers, and divers, is well recognized as an essential step for more protection and conservation of marine biodiversity in Tyre. Furthermore, the importance of ecotourism activities based on marine biodiversity has been clear. Finally, the project shows the importance of cooperation and collaboration with all stakeholders and more focus on the importance of TCNR.

7. The way forward

Based on the activities carried out, the association is proposing a series of recommendations for future SPAMI DAY celebrations:

- More Collaboration and Synergy with other SPAMI through increasing the SPAMI twinning program ongoing.
- Following the big effort and support of SPAMIs in the Mediterranean Sea
- Increase the visibility of SPAMi, with a special focus on eastern Mediterranean SPAMi
- Video creation for all SPAMIS
- Regularly organizing Online interview with SPAMI Managers
- Offering opportunity (as small project) for SPAMI helping implementing activities
- Need and necessity to find a sustainable and continue link between all SPAMIs
- The necessity to establish an action plan between SPAMi focusing on main treats/ pressures/ and common needs between SPAMI.

Link for all photos and videos: [Lebanon - OneDrive \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

N.B: some activities have been published on the national tv-and national press. For More Infos: FB page: La Vie Marine au Liban



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