

Involuntary restrictions – Process Framework Safeguarding communities in Ain-El-Ghazala (Libya), WWF

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

This project is a multi-country project called the “SEA-Med Project”, led by WWF-MedPO. The SEA-Med Project involves 8 MPAs (and their surrounding coastal areas) in Libya, Tunisia, Albania, Turkey, Croatia and Algeria that have already benefited from WWF’s support within the MedPAN South project (panda.org/msp). Over the past 4 years, some of these MPAs have made important progresses towards being operational and effectively managing coastal and marine resources. In addition, commitment of national and local authorities was secured, and expectations among users, stakeholders and governments raised. However, much remains to be done for these MPAs to be transformed from paper-parks to effective ecosystem-based management tools, delivering benefits and promoting green economies. The SEA-Med project is designed to advance these 8 MPAs towards a fully operational phase, which includes committed and engaged stakeholders, management plans that address key issues (tourism and fisheries), and financing mechanisms to secure long-term operations and sustainability. The project will renew WWF’s support to CSOs, NGOs, resources managers and authorities within the project countries for them to be capable to actively engage in and influence decision-making processes affecting the management of the project areas.

Several of the activities conducted in Libya, and specifically in Ain-El-Ghazala MPA, could have potential implications on the resource use of local communities, predominantly as this relates to unsustainable, illegal and destructive hunting and fishing practices. Bird hunting and fisheries are widespread practices in Ain-El-Ghazala, which are conducted illegally and without any government monitoring and enforcement. Through the establishment of a local management unit, a management plan for the MPA, and extensive stakeholder engagement work, the project aims at reducing these impacts to the biodiversity of this area.

The livelihoods of other local community members may also be affected, through reduced access to fishing grounds, which may not be illegal, unsustainable or destructive. However, in order to improve the management and protection of resources, the MPA management plan may include restricted access to no-take zones or additional fisheries regulations. Ultimately, through better management and more sustainable practices, it is expected that local communities should improve their livelihoods. The project will identify the diversity of stakeholders in the area and will implement a process of community consultations and seek to mitigate conflicts among stakeholders by coming to joint decisions and proposing alternative income generation. WWF has a long history of community/stakeholder engagement work, which has proven successful in overcoming challenges and conflicts linked to resource management. Through communication, consultation and capacity building, WWF sees the direct involvement of communities/stakeholders to the MPA management as key for achieving effective MPAs.

Direct positive impacts of the project will include a management unit for Ain-E-Ghazala, staffed and equipped, and with the necessary skills to manage, enforce and monitor coastal and marine resources. Monitoring activities, awareness-raising and participatory mapping of resource use will not have negative effects on local communities, but rather, the latter two will clarify the legal situation of resource use within the protected Areas, determine the potential economic impacts of MPA establishment and improved enforcement on local communities, and identify potential mitigation strategies.

B. PARTICIPATORY IMPLEMENTATION

The project will provide support to the protected area management, including the development of a management plan and the establishment of an operative management unit. The management plan will include regulations for removing illegal practices (e.g. bomb fishing and hunting), user zones to improve the status of marine wildlife, and enforcement measures to ensure compliance.

An extensive consultation process with local partners was organized in Ain-El-Ghazela to define the main lines of action and make sure that local needs and expectations are fully taken into account. WWF will apply a well-tested approach, which entails an integrated participatory planning process that includes government authorities, stakeholders and the community. This approach is intended to avoid conflicts, to prevent communities to exercise their access rights to marine resources (e.g. fisheries) and to create the endorsement needed for the MPA.

C. CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY OF AFFECTED PERSONS

Very few affected persons are likely to be eligible for mitigation/compensation measures as involuntary restrictions will be predominantly placed on activities which are dearly illegal, unsustainable and destructive.

WWF and partners will work to consult all local communities during the project implementation, through a process of free, prior and informed consent, and hence all villages/villagers surrounding the MPA could be eligible in the future, to partake in an incentive-based conservation approach. The project does not intend to negatively affect livelihoods are not unsustainable, illegal or destructive.

D. MEASURES TO ASSIST THE AFFECTED PERSONS

The community consultations will determine whether any persons are affected and considered eligible for mitigation/compensation measures. If needed, mitigation measures will be discussed and developed with the affected persons and community groups.

E. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINT MECHANISM

The awareness-raising component of this project has been included, to ensure all local communities are aware the project activities and the implications of the development of the protected area and its management plan. There will be opportunity for communities to consult with the Marine Biological Research Center (MBRC) on these matters which will likely involve village leaders and other civil society groups discussing key issues. WWF will facilitate these discussions and meetings.

The participatory process and community consultations will provide substantial information on the patterns of resource use of local communities, which will inform the awareness-raising programme of which groups/individuals need to be targeted and will therefore be affected most by restrictions on resources. We hope that this logical proceeding of activities and the consultation and involvement of local communities in the project, will minimise any potential conflicts and grievances.

Grievances and conflicts raised by affected communities, civil society groups or individuals, can be brought to the MPA management authority (MBRC) or WWF staff. All communities will be made aware that grievances can be made at any time, to any of the above individuals/organisations. WWF and MBRC should be the first point of call. Should any of

these organisations receive a grievance, they will be required to report this to WWF immediately.

WWF will have responsibility to ensure these grievances are dealt with promptly and will work with project partners to achieve this. Upon receipt of a grievance, WWF and project partners will hold meetings with local communities or individuals, to discuss the issues and develop amicable solutions which will be implemented by the project. WWF will keep the CEPF informed and consulted regarding any grievances that arise and to develop the solutions that will be implemented by the project.

Mediation for grievance reporting and consultations can occur through representatives from People's Committees, project partners, civil society groups involved in the project to ensure restrictions, eligibility criteria and mitigation measures are understood and appropriate to local communities.

F. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

WWF is responsible for overall management of the project, but will require close cooperation with MBRC. MBRC will be responsible for allocating appropriate staff for project activities and managing their activities in the field (with support from WWF). Joint responsibility will be necessary for WWF and MBRC to develop the MPA management plan. Implementation of this plan past the lifetime of the project will be the responsibility of MBRC or any other entity identified for the management of the MPA. WWF will assist with implementation during the project as it relates to stakeholder engagement, capacity building, management plan development (including all its components). Local community members will assist in implementation and development of the management plan.