IVUS



Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production

Nature-based Solutions: a strategy for a covic recovery

The contribution of the MAVA Foundation's Mediterranean Programme and the Switchers community to the implementation of NbS in the Mediterranean Basin

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Please contact Lucille Guiheneuf by email to access the full version of the report lucille.guiheneuf@scprac.org













Generalitat de Catalunya Departament d'Acció Climàtica, Alimentació i Agenda Rural



Thank you for downloading the executive summary. Please contact Lucille Guiheneuf by email to access the full version of the report. *lucille.guiheneuf@scprac.org*

Table of Contents

The contribution of the MAVA Foundation's Mediterranean Programme and the Switchers community to the implementation of NbS in the Mediterranean Basin	1
Table of Contents	2
Acknowledgments	4
Definitions applied within this assignment	6
Executive Summary	10
i. Introduction	21
The COVID-19 pandemic and its responses	22
NbS and the post-COVID-19 recovery	25
NbS in the policy agenda	26
ii. The Nature-based Solutions identified	28
Greece	28
STARAMAKIS	29
TERRA LEMNIA	42
Italy	48
MARISTANIS	49
Могоссо	60
Establishment and co-management of No-Take Zones and adjacent buffer zones to promote equitable and effective management of the Marine Protected Area in the Al Hoceima National Park (I	PNAH-AMP). 60



Tunisia	71
GEMWET	72
iii. A blueprint for investable NbS	84
A 6-step approach to investable NbS	86
iv. Lessons learnt for NbS practitioners, decision-makers, and potential investors	105
v. Lessons learnt from the operationalisation of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS	113
Annex 1 – COVID-19 recovery plans, policy measures and fiscal stimulus that might have an impact on NbS	116
Annex 2 – NbS in the European and international policy frameworks	120
Annex 3 – Cost-Benefit Analysis and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA)	122
Annex 4 – Financial Services providers operating in the Mediterranean	124
Annex 5 – Methodology	128



Acknowledgments

Author

Alessandra Pome

Associate Expert, UNEP/MAP - SCP/RAC

Technical experts

Francesca Antonelli

Dams and infrastructure Lead, WWF International

Francesca brings 20 years of experience at WWF working at the intersection of conservation and water-management infrastructure. In her current role as Dams & Infrastructure Lead, she uses her expertise to lead strategy development and coordination of hydropower and infrastructure programs across the network. She is a biologist by training and has produced multiple reports for WWF on the case for conservation in water infrastructure development. She holds a master's degree in conservation of animal biodiversity and ecological networks from the University of Rome La Sapienza.

Emmanuelle Cohen-Shacham

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Thematic Group Lead, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)

Emmanuelle Cohen-Shacham is a consultant, researcher and group lead in the fields of nature conservation, environmental sciences and policy. She has 20 years of experience, working in academic institutes, governmental and for non-profit organisations.

Emmanuelle has contributed to developing the IUCN work on NbS since 2014 and she leads the NbS Thematic Group, at IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management. She led the publication Nature-based Solutions to address global societal challenges, the 2019 paper on the IUCN core principles for NbS and was closely involved in the development of the Global Standard for NbS. She did her Ph.D. on ecosystem services and ecosystem management in Mediterranean wetlands, at Tel-Aviv University, Israel.

Sue Wells

Marine Protected Areas, community fisheries management consultant

Sue brings 40 years' experience in marine and coastal conservation, working for and with a range of international organisations, NGOs and governments. She has particular expertise in marine protected areas, as well as broad experience in biodiversity conservation, community fisheries management, marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management,



and sustainable livelihoods. Her principal skills lie in assessing management effectiveness, project evaluation, capacity building, programme development and management, policy development, and dissemination of information, particularly the interpretation of science for conservation practitioners. Sue recently co-authored the <u>Marine protected and conserved</u> areas in the time of COVID.¹

Jesus Iglesias Saugar

Social Climate - Social innovation for climate action Co-founder, facilitator and consultant

As an international consultant, Jesus catalyses processes of "social innovation for the climate", unleashing the power of the social economy for climate action and justice, both on the local and global level, through multilateral cooperation. Since 2008, he has co-founded various organisations committed to developing and scaling up disruptive, cooperative and inclusive solutions to the climate & inequality crises, like <u>Incubaeco, ECOVE, Ecopreneurs for the Climate</u>, or Social Climate recently. He holds a Bachelor of Science from the Higher Technical School of Telecommunication Engineers (Valladolid, Spain) and the École Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications de Bretagne (Brest, France), a Masters in Space & Planetary Science from the Paris Observatory (Paris, France) and the University of California Berkeley (Berkeley, USA), and an International Master in Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility from the EOI Business School (Madrid). In addition, he is an active member of the Climate Reality Project, the Advanced Leadership Foundation, 350.org, and the Mediterranean Nature-based Solutions Cluster.

Catalina Becerra, Florian Vernaz, and Alexander Koch

Natural Strategies

Natural Strategies is a team of international consultants working on finance for NbS globally. Their expertise include: (i) the development of ecosystem & natural climate policies for governments & private sector, (ii) turning policies into coherent investment strategies & funding proposals, (iii) based on this, mobilising sustainable finance for nature based solutions from private, public, national, regional and international sources, (iv) providing investment advice & technical assistance during implementation and (v) helping monitor, report on & evaluate corresponding impacts & results.

Supervision

- Magali Outters, Team Leader Policy Area, UNEP/MAP- SCP/RAC
- Alessandro Miraglia, Team Leader, Networking and Communication Facility, UNEP/MAP- SCP/RAC
- Marta Junquera-Tordesillas, WES Project Manager, UNEP-MAP SCP/RAC

¹ IUCN WCPA (2021). PARKS. The International Journal of Protected Areas and Conservation, Volume 27 (Special Issue), Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.



Definitions applied within this assignment

Within this assignment, the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) was used to ascertain whether interventions qualified or not as NbS.

- The IUCN Global Standard for NbS, released in 2020, is the result of two years of extensive consultations, involving more than 1,000 individuals, out of which one-sixth represented the private sector, across 100 countries. The Standard builds on the resolution (<u>WCC-2016-Res-069</u>), which was adopted during the 2016 World Conservation Congress and, for the first time, defined the use of nature for simultaneous benefits to biodiversity and human well-being, as well as on the IUCN publication that outlines the NbS framework (<u>Cohen-Shacham, 2016</u>) and a set of eight best practice principles for successfully implementing and upscaling NbS (<u>Cohen-Shacham, 2019</u>).
- The IUCN definition for NbS is: "Actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits." ²

However, the existence of other NbS definitions has been duly considered, as well as the adoption of NbS by international bodies and policies over time (as summarised in Annex 2):

• The European Commission (EC) defines NbS as: "Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions." ³

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) proposes that "NbS are measures that protect, sustainably manage or restore nature, with the goal of maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services to address a variety of social, environmental and economic challenges." ⁴

The EU, OECD and IUCN definitions share three common elements:

- 1. The actions are based on nature.
- 2. They deliver value to society by addressing societal challenges (e.g., biodiversity loss, climate change).

² E. Cohen-Shacham et al. (eds.), Nature-based Solutions to address global societal challenges, IUCN, 2016 and C. Nesshöver et al., The science, policy and practice of nature-based solutions: and interdisciplinary perspective, Science of Total Environment, 2016. <u>https://oppla.eu/about</u> NbS repository

³ For a comparison of the definitions of NbS by the European Commission and the IUCN, and for an overview of related concepts please refer to Cohen-Shacham, E., Walters, G., Janzen, C. and Maginnis, S. (eds.) (2016). Nature-based Solutions to address global societal challenges. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xiii + 97pp.

⁴ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2020). Nature-based solutions for adapting to water-related climate risks. OECD Environment Policy Papers, No. 21, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/2257873d-en.



3. They benefit nature by preserving and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services.

All the definitions refer to nature, but there are fundamental differences: OECD and IUCN's definitions emphasise the need for a well-managed or restored ecosystem to be at the heart of any NbS, while the European Commission definition is somewhat broader and places more emphasis on applying solutions that not only use nature but are also inspired and supported by nature.⁵

According to the EU-funded Connecting Nature project, NbS are delivered by different types of organisations, including enterprises. The project recognizes the following definitions:

- Nature-based enterprises use nature as a core element of their product/service offering for the planning, delivery and/or stewardship of NbS and engage in economic activity.
- Nature-based organisations use nature as a core element of their product/service offering for the planning, delivery and/or stewardship of NbS but do not engage in economic activity.
- Nature-based products and services may be offered by enterprises or organisations where nature is not a core element of their product/service offering.

WWF defines <u>Bankable Nature Solutions</u> as solutions that create positive environmental returns leading to positive biodiversity impacts of climate mitigation and/or adaptation. Bankable Nature Solutions are acceptable to investors as they have (a combination of) the following characteristics: i) cash flow generating activities, ii) sufficient collateral, iii) a high probability of success, iv) a clear exit strategy, v) an acceptable risk-adjusted rate of return, vi) a clear proof of concept and vii) proven track record. Bankable Nature Solutions are intrinsically different from conservation projects as they are managed by the private sector and their design is centred on revenue generating activities to cover project costs and generate a return on investment.

Finally, the <u>UN Environment Programme</u> (UNEP) is leading a coordinated global effort on NbS, building on the outcomes of the <u>NbS manifesto</u> developed during the UN <u>Climate</u> <u>Action Summit</u> (convened by the UN Secretary-General on 23 September 2019), in support to the <u>United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030</u>. ⁶

NbS investment is a financial flow that contributes positively to financing nature-related activities or assets.7

Financial strategy of an organisation is essentially concerned with procurement and utilisation of funds. The basic purpose is to ensure adequate and regular supply of funds fulfilling the present and future requirements of the business enterprise. As NbS is a new financial asset, no clear nomenclature in this area is available.

Investability refers to the quality of being attractive or profitable to invest in. In the case of NbS, this could apply to private investors seeking financial returns and triple bottom line value or institutional investors seeking social return on investment in the form of public goods and environmental services.

⁵ Cohen-Shacham, E., Walters, G., Janzen, C. and Maginnis, S. (eds.) (2016). Nature-based Solutions to address global societal challenges. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xiii + 97pp.

⁶ For further information also visit: <u>https://www.iucn.org/theme/nature-based-solutions/initiatives/decade-ecosystem-restoration</u>

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (2021). State of Finance for Nature 2021. Nairobi.



Public financial services providers include:

Governments, with examples including domestic financing through public expenditure using the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG), international development aid financing (e.g., official development assistance - ODA) and official sector transactions that do not meet ODA criteria (e.g., other official flows - OOF).

Development finance institutions (DFIs), subdivided into:

- National DFIs: a single country owns the institution and finance is directed domestically;
- Bilateral DFIs: a single country owns the institution, and it directs finance flows internationally;
- Multilateral DFIs: the institution has multiple shareholder countries and directs finance flows internationally.

Environmental/climate funds, which can be further categorised into:

- National environmental/climate funds;
- Bilateral/multilateral environmental/climate funds.

Private financial services providers include:

Commercial financial institutions: providers of private debt capital and insurance, including commercial and investment banks;

Investors: including insurance companies, asset management firms, pension funds active in capital markets, venture capital and infrastructure funds;

Corporations: for-profit legal entities;

Philanthropies: including foundations and endowments.

Incubators: Organisations designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services that could include physical space, capital, coaching, common services, and networking connections

Numerous financial instruments are available to public and private financial services providers to channel capital to NbS activities, actions or assets. These include:

- capital supply instruments (equity, loans, bonds and grants);
- risk mitigation instruments that transfer risk (insurance, guarantees and off-take agreements);
- fiscal, revenue instruments (subsidies).



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

- The MAVA Foundation is striving to leave an important legacy in the Mediterranean basin after almost 30 years of investment in biodiversity conservation. During the phasing out period (2020-2022), it aims to ensure the scaling up of solutions to a pan-Mediterranean level by mainstreaming successful approaches in regional policy and decision-making processes and demonstrating the value of natural capital in sustainable development. This is particularly relevant given the COVID-19 global crisis, associated policy responses and the evolution of the pandemic in the region.
- To this end, the MAVA Mediterranean Programme engaged UNEP-MAP SCP/RAC⁸ to design a strategic approach that could inform and orientate the work of its partnership in the Mediterranean in the 2020-2022 period.
- The assignment aimed to:
 - identify the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) developed by MAVA's partners and the <u>Switchers</u> (a community of green entrepreneurs established and supported by SCP/RAC) in the Mediterranean by applying the <u>IUCN Global Standard for NbS</u>,
 - describe each NbS through a set of descriptors, and
 - develop a set of recommendations and priority actions to ensure the identified NbS can effectively deliver the expected societal and environmental benefits amidst the COVID-19 pandemic,

- draw key recommendations for the systemisation and scaling-up of these NbS to make them a central part of the policy and recovery agenda in the Mediterranean.
- NbS are considered to have the potential to enhance ecosystem resilience and address societal challenges, such as food and water security, climate change, and human health. They are also regarded as a cost-effective insurance against the emergence of new zoonotic diseases such as Covid-19. However, despite the growing interest from governments, businesses and financial institutions, our knowledge and understanding of NbS, how much capital should be directed to them, and the investment opportunities available, is still incomplete.⁹
- The MAVA Mediterranean Programme, its 7 Outcome Action Plans (OAPs), and the <u>Switchers community</u> represent a potentially wide pool of NbS that, as required by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s definition¹⁰, have been developed "to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural and modified ecosystems in ways that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, to provide both human well-being and biodiversity benefits".
- As detailed in the Methodology (Annex 5), a preliminary screening of the MAVA projects and the Switchers community was conducted to identify the interventions most suitable to undergo the IUCN Global Standard for NbS self-assessment. Following the official presentation of the assignment in

⁸ The <u>Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC)</u> is a centre for international cooperation with Mediterranean countries on development and innovation in the production sector and civil society, based on more sustainable consumption and production models. The Centre develops its activity under the <u>Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)</u> for the protection and development of the Mediterranean basin, an organisation belonging to the <u>United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)</u>.

⁹ United Nations Environment Programme (2021). State of Finance for Nature 2021. Nairobi.

¹⁰ Cohen-Shacham, E., Walters, G., Janzen, C. and Maginnis, S. (eds.) (2016). Nature-based Solutions to address global societal challenges. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xiii + 97pp.



March 2021, a <u>Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Survey</u> was developed and shared with the organisations that expressed interest to assess whether their interventions qualified or not as NbS. The NbS Survey consisted of the following Parts:

- PART 1: The <u>IUCN Global Standard for NbS self-assessment tool</u>, which develops around <u>8 criteria and 28 indicators</u>. For an intervention to qualify as NbS, regardless of percentage match, all criteria must be at least PARTIALLY addressed;
- PART 2: The Engagement opportunity. The indicators only PARTIALLY or INSUFFICIENTLY met represent areas for improvement. For each one of these areas of improvement, partners were invited to detail priority actions to be implemented by the end of 2022 to improve their interventions and turn them into robust NbS;

- PART 3: A questionnaire aimed to compile general information about the identified NbS to inform the development of the Capitalisation Plan.
- Nine out of over 30 MAVA projects (c. 30 percent) and five out of over 40 Switchers' interventions (c. 10 percent) in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Tunisia, Morocco, and Italy¹¹, expressed interest in participating in the assignment. Nine of these completed the NbS survey (Figure 1).
 - Of these 14, five MAVA projects and two Switchers qualified as NbS (Table 1), representing approximately 10 percent of the total interventions originally screened. The total number of NbS implemented by MAVA partners and the Switchers in the Mediterranean might well be higher as the assignment covered only some Mediterranean countries, ran on an extremely tight timeframe, and there was no built-in direct financial incentive to support participants in using the IUCN Global Standard for NbS selfassessment tool.

¹¹ The original geographical scope of the assignment was limited to the following countries: Spain, Greece, Tunisia and Morocco. The scope was then extended to include Portugal and Italy.





Figure 1 – The 9 interventions that undertook the IUCN Global Standard for NbS self-assessment.



Ecosystem types	Freshwater			Landscapes		Marine	
Name of the interventions	MARISTANIS project	The Sebou Basin Water Fund	GEMWET project	Terra Lemnia project	STARAMAKI SCE	Al Hoceima MPA/NTZ	Torre Guaceto MPA/NTZ
Country	Italy	Morocco	Tunisia	Greece	Greece	Morocco	Italy
Description	A model for integrated coastal and wetlands management, by protecting, sustainably managing and restoring a large portion of the Gulf of Oristano.	A Water Fund established in two sub-basins within the Sebou river catchment. It builds on a 10-year-old partnership between the river basin management bodies and several international environmental NGOs.	A model for integrated coastal and wetlands management in North Africa. It specifically aims at protecting, sustainably managing, and restoring Ghar el Melah lagoon in Tunisia.	A sustainable development model for the Lemnos Island based on the conservation and selective re-introduction of semi-extensive agro-pastoral practises of the traditional mandra system, and the promotion of its products and producers as part of the island's living heritage.	A Social Cooperative Enterprise based in the rural region of Kilkis in Central Macedonia that utilises the by- product of local wheat and rye cultivation to produce a viable eco-friendly alternative to single-use plastic straws and, at the same time, create employment opportunities for vulnerable population and promote social cohesion, as well as local and regional development.	A revolving fund that fulfils three main objectives, environmental, economic and social, by promoting sustainable fishing practises, ensuring a stable income for fishermen, and promoting women empowerment.	A management consortium managing a marine protected area and enforcing fishing regulations. Part of the protected area contains the Torre Guaceto Ramsar Site, designated by the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 1981.

Table 1 - Brief description of the five MAVA projects and two Switchers that qualified as NbS.

Two interventions were found not to fully adhere with the IUCN Global Standard, and thus do not currently qualify as an NbS. These are:

The Rios Livres project led by Grupo de Estudos de Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente (GEOTA) in Portugal. This project aims to research and demonstrate alternatives to hydropower for energy production, promote adaptation or removal of obsolete barriers in the Douro/Tejo basin, mitigate impacts of dams where these are essential, and create a legally based conservation designation for free-flowing rivers based on a map of no-go areas. The focus of the project is mainly advocacy and lobbying against the development of unsustainable infrastructures. While positively contributing to the protection of the transboundary Douro/Tejo river basin, these actions alone did not meet many of the criteria of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS. However, it would be still relevant to identify the shortfalls and to develop actions that would mean the project would gualify as an NbS.

Chanouf Farm Biofire is a farm that grows pears and olives in Tunisia. To diversify its sources of income, the company has created an agroforestry waste recycling unit. Using biomass waste, fertiliser, charcoal, tar and fuel briquettes are manufactured. The latter is an environmentally friendly alternative to firewood, the harvesting of which is one of the major contributors to deforestation. As for the Rios Livres project, Chanouf Farm Biofire did not meet - at least partially - many of the criteria of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS: however, by strengthening certain areas and with adequate technical support, Biofire has the potential to qualify as a successful for-profit NbS.



Unfortunately, the teams of the Torre Guaceto MPA/NTZ and the Sebou Basin Water Fund were unable to complete the NbS survey on time. Their interventions did qualify as NbS but will not be described in this report.

The IUCN Global Standard for NbS, the associated user guide, and the self-assessment tool provided a shared language and framework not only to effectively verify whether an intervention qualified as an NbS or not, but also to elicit useful insights on where work is needed to strengthen the NbS interventions and scale them up. The MAVA partners and the Switchers were thus able to identify areas of improvement for their interventions that with further investment would turn their interventions into strong and viable NbS.

Table 2 summarises the outcome of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS self-assessment, and the main areas of improvement identified by the 7 interventions for the 8 Criteria of the Standard.

Ecosystem types	Fre	eshwater	Lands	scapes	Marine	Areas of improvement	
Criterion/ Interventions	MARISTANIS project	GEMWET project	Terra Lemnia project	STARAMAKI SCE	Al Hoceima MPA/NTZ		
Country	Italy	Tunisia	Greece	Greece	Morocco		
1. Societal challenges	56%	67%	67%	56%	33%	Human wellbeing impact assessment	Most of the interventions did not adequately meet Indicator 1.3 related to human wellbeing outcomes arising from the NbS. These outcomes are generally poorly identified, not benchmarked and only periodically assessed.
2. Design at scale	56%	78%	78%	67%	67%		
3. Biodiversity net- gain	75%	67%	75%	42%	67%	Environmental Impact assessment	Evidence-based assessment of the current state of the ecosystem and prevailing drivers of degradation and loss is missing or incomplete for several of the interventions assessed. Clear and measurable biodiversity conservation outcomes, benchmarks and indicators, including for unintended adverse consequences on nature arising from the NbS,



							and opportunities to enhance ecosystem integrity and connectivity are missing or not well defined or regularly monitored for several of the interventions assessed.
4. Economic feasibility	33%	33%	42%	33%	50%	Economic impact assessment and long-term NbS viability	The direct and indirect benefits and costs associated with the NbS, and their distribution among stakeholder groups, are not or only partially identified and documented. The cost-effectiveness of the NbS against available alternatives (including no action), including the likely impact of any relevant regulations and subsidies, are not or only partially assessed and documented for several of the interventions assessed. A portfolio of resourcing options is not or only partially identified for several of the interventions assessed.



5. Inclusive governance	47%	87%	67%	67%	87%	Appropriate NbS governance and legal structure	Participatory process, based on mutual respect and equality, regardless of gender, age or social status, and that upholds the right of Indigenous Peoples to Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), including a feedback and grievance resolution mechanism, is missing or only partially in place and documented for several of the interventions assessed. Where the scale of the NbS extends beyond jurisdictional boundaries, mechanisms are not or only poorly established to enable joint decision-making among the stakeholders in those jurisdictions affected by the NbS for several of the interventions assessed.
6. Balance trade-offs	33%	67%	78%	44%	56%	Trade-offs, safeguards,and corrective actions	The potential costs and benefits of associated trade- offs arising from the NbS interventions are not or only partially acknowledged and periodically updated. Safeguards and any appropriate corrective actions are not or only poorly developed for several of the interventions assessed.
7. Adaptive management	67%	100%	67%	56%	67%	Adaptive management	A framework for iterative learning that enables adaptive management is not or poorly applied throughout the intervention lifecycle for several of the interventions assessed.



8. Sustainability and mainstreaming	67%	44%	67%	33%	67%	Mechanisms to mainstream NbS in existing policy frameworks	No formal mechanism is in place for NbS to contribute to national and global targets for human wellbeing, climate change, biodiversity and human rights, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), for several of the interventions assessed.
Total percentage match	54%	68%	67%	50%	62%		

Legend Key						
	Strong					
	Adequate	Intervention adheres to the IUCN Global Standard for NbS.				
	Partial					
	Insufficient	Intervention does not adhere to the IUCN Global Standard for NbS.				

Table 2 - Final rating for each one of the 8 Criteria of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS, the total percentage of adherence to the Standard, and main areas of improvement.

• Building on the findings of the NbS survey, and in close consultation with the project experts, partners elaborated a set of recommendations and priority actions to be implemented by 2022 to address the identified areas of improvement and enhance the performance of their interventions for each Criterion. To address these areas of improvement, particularly concerning Criteria 1, 3, 4 and 6, a 6-step methodology was developed to guide and inform NbS practitioners on how to strengthen and build a solid business case and a viable financial strategy for their interventions. The methodology develops around the following 6 steps:





- Step 5 includes <u>a simple decision-making tool</u> to help NbS practitioners/proponents identify the most suitable resource options for the implementation of their interventions, as required under Indicator 4.4 of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS. Following a decision-tree process, practitioners/proponents can identify the most suitable financial instruments and be guided towards a list of financial services providers offering these instruments in the Mediterranean region.
- By accompanying and supporting the implementation of the 6-step methodology from September 2021 to December 2022, the MAVA Foundation would secure the long-term viability of 7 NbS across three ecosystem types, 4 Mediterranean countries, and diverse economic sectors, while contributing to the mitigation of some of the most pressing societal challenges and build a more resilient Mediterranean region.
- Most importantly, the MAVA Foundation's legacy will be strengthened as it will have contributed to:
 - o Building a scientifically sound knowledge base on NbS in the Mediterranean,
 - o The establishment of viable and successful NbS, cable of attracting new investments and investors,
 - The mainstreaming of NbS in national and regional policy frameworks and processes, such as the Barcelona Convention and the Union for the Mediterranean,
 - Cross-sectoral collaboration between nature conservation organisations and the Switchers community of green entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean.
- Conducting the IUCN Global Standard for NbS self-assessment proved extremely thought-provoking and valuable for all partners. It also proved to be a very demanding process, particularly for the Switchers. The Switchers are mainly for-profit organisations, often unfamiliar with the jargon and project cycle approach that characterise the



conservation sector. Lessons learnt have therefore been distilled into a set of lessons learnt that hopefully will inform future application of the IUCN Standard to such organisations (Table 4).

Challenges	Lesson learnt			
Adapting projects to the IUCN Standard approach				
Several definitions and frameworks exist for assessing NbS, so why use the IUCN definition and operational framework (NbS Global Standard)?	The IUCN Global Standard for NbS is based on the IUCN definitional and conceptual frameworks, and it was developed through an extensive, 2-years global public consultation process that reached hundreds of stakeholders from 100 countries. Though improvable, the Standard builds on solid science and technical expertise gathered to develop the definition and principles for NbS (that was adopted unanimously by the IUCN in 2016).			
The self-assessment tool is not adapted to for-profit organisations.	A governance structure is being put in place to address issues that might be raised during the piloting of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS and to improve the Standard accordingly. This structure is already addressing the comments stemming from the operationalisation of the Standard by for-profit organisations.			
Developing a good NbS is not a priority within the organisation.	Increased demand for NbS has led to cases of misuse of the concept. In the worst-case scenarios, misuse runs the risk of damaging biodiversity and eroding nature and its services. In addition, weak or mislabelled NbS projects can water down the case for the NbS approach – de-incentivising its use, eroding donors'/investors' confidence and misdirecting efforts. It should thus be important for NBS practitioners/promoters to take the time to assess their interventions against a globally recognized standard, such as the IUCN Global Standard for NbS, before making official claims.			
Starting the self-assessment process				



The IUCN Global Standard for NbS self-assessment tool requires a significant time investment to understand, interpret and assess the 8 criteria and 28 indicators.	Before starting the self-assessment process, it is important to ensure the buy-in of key decision-makers within the organisation: the top management must agree and support the process and establish a responsible person for this task. All invested parties/stakeholders should be informed and consulted as appropriate; all available resources, as well as external partners, should be consulted to correctly address and clarify more complex questions.
For-profit organisations tend to have limited capacity, time and resources to commit to this process.	In addition to the available IUCN Standard guidance, tailored technical assistance is often needed to ensure a more accurate self-assessment. This holds particularly true for for-profit organisations, which often do not have internal capacity.
Defining the scope of the intervention to be assesse	d
The scope of the intervention should be well defined before starting the self-assessment.	Details of the intervention and its scope should be well defined and explicated before starting the self-assessment. The scope of an NbS can be defined geographically, legally, by type of interventions, etc.
Justifying the ratings	
Guiding questions are not followed properly. Indicators are misunderstood and wrongly rated.	Practitioners need guidance while deciding how to rate their interventions against the 28 indicators of the self-assessment tool. Often practitioners tend to overrate or underrate their intervention. A set of simple and clear examples might be provided for each level of rating/indicator to best inform and guide the respondents. The IUCN Standard Guidance already provides some examples: maybe more detailed examples or from various cases (for-profit, marine, etc.) might be further developed within the self-assessment tool.
Sourcing and validating the Means of Verification	
The evidence required may not be clearly defined, quantitative, publicly available, sufficiently granular or reliable.	Where information is not available or unreliable, respondents should adopt a precautionary approach and be clear on information limitations. In addition, all stakeholders should be engaged in the self-assessment as they might have the information needed.

Table 4 – Lessons learnt from the operationalisation of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS through the self-assessment tool in the framework of this assignment.





Appropiate NbS governance and legal structure

Appropiate governance processes and legal structures are critical in determining successful outcomes of NbS for people and nature.



Time

To fully deliver the expected benefits, ecological processes take time. 80

Risk assessment and Safeguards

Unanticipated risks, safeguards and appropiate mitigation actions should be identified throughout the NbS cycle, particularly to attract private investments.



Demonstrate impact at scale

> More science-based, on-ground evidence is needed at scale to inform and convince decisionmakers to invest in NbS.



Inform the political and regulatory agenda

Mechanisms should ensure empirical evidence informs policy and regulatory processes at local, national, and international level.



A stable flow of investment

Financial stability is paramount for ecological processes to deliver the expected societal and environmental benefits.



NbS resilience to major shocks

While the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of NbS, the recovery phase represents and opportunity to scale investments in NbS.



Design for NbS

NbS design is still dominated by conservation organisation. Need to simplify the language to allow for-profit to get on board.

To address a wide range of sectors, stakeholders, dimensions, scales, and societal challenges, NbS require a wide diversity of expertise,

capacities, and skills.

Human

capacity

for change The leadership of a local organisation, community or individual seems to be a success factor shared by many of the

interventions assessed.

Leading





Roles & Responsabilities

Each organisation, private, public, non-for-profit or academy, has a specific role to play in ensuring sucessful NbS.

boa