

Assessing the management effectiveness and developing guidelines for its improvement in Nature Park Telašćica, Croatia

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

Mosor Prvan

Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development

Sunce, Croatia

e-mail: mosoriensis@gmail.com

Executive summary

Impoverishment of the Earth's oceans has been a long-term process which was drastically accelerated over the last decades (Jackson et al. 2001). Anthropogenic pressure on the marine environment became so large that some authors even claim that humans are systematically devouring marine animals to extinction (Norse and Crowder 2005). The Adriatic Sea, just as any other sea, is not an isolated system. Pressures and threats that affect the Earth's oceans appear on the larger or smaller scales in the Adriatic as well (EEA 2006).

So far marine protected areas (MPAs) have proven a key tool for countering those threats (Secretariat of the CBD 2006). Unfortunately, MPAs are too few as they cover just around 0.5% of ocean areas and 1.4% of the coastal shelf areas. Most are small and only few are adequately managed. Therefore it is essential to establish new MPAs but even more to increase efficiency of the existing ones (Roberts 2005, Secretariat of the CBD 2006).

The first step towards increased efficiency is protected area management effectiveness (PAME) analysis. To maximize the potential, managers and policy-makers need information on the strengths and weaknesses in their management and on the pressures and threats that MPAs face (Hockings 2003). In Croatia this practice is new and so far PAME analysis has never been performed at protected area level, as opposed to system based analysis which was done in 2008-2009 by Rajkovic (2010).

In order to improve management effectiveness of Telašćica Nature Park, the PAME methodology developed by WWF Italy and IUCN Mediterranean Office was chosen. As the methodology, developed to suit the needs of Mediterranean MPAs, was still in the testing phase, an additional objective of the project was to provide feedback to the authors. The methodology is based on 18 indicators of different aspects of PA management. It is in the form of Excel sheet scorecard, which, according to provided data and values, automatically scores results in the form of colour code (blue – full compliance, green – compliant, yellow – insufficient, red – non compliant) and therefore provides an indication of management effectiveness "at a glance". Telašćica Nature Park is the only non EU MPA to which this methodology has been applied to date.

PAME clearly showed major issues and shortcomings that need to be addressed in order to increase management effectiveness of Telašćica Nature Park. According to the results of the analysis, the most pressing are: unregulated fishing; budget constraints; lack of information on seawater quality; no alien invasive species monitoring; lack of educational and interpretational programs and activities; no organized staff training procedures; and complete lack of any form of climate change monitoring.

The complete results of the assessment will be published in a form of an additional publication while the Telašćica Nature Park pilot study will be a part of the WWF Italy and IUCN Med Office Guidebook "Evaluation Guide for Mediterranean MPAs Management".