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Strengthening the System of MCPAs of Turkey

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Abstract - The present paper briefly describes the project entitled "the Strengthening the System of the Marine and Coastal Protected Areas of Turkey" and its outcomes from 2009 to 2013.

Introduction

The major outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) "The Future We Want" document stressed "the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development", and the article 177 dictated that the "importance of area-based conservation measures, including marine protected areas", and noted that "decision X/2 of the tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, that by 2020 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, [were] to be conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures" (Kalkınma Bakanlığı, 2012). In this context, within the marine areas bordering Turkey's lengthy coastline is found an abundant, highly diverse and globally significant biodiversity endowment. As a baseline in 2009 about 2.6% of Turkey's territorial coastal waters were protected. Turkey's system of MPAs consists of 10 Special Environmental Protection Areas (SEPA), 3 National Parks, 1 Nature Park and about 40 fisheries restricted areas. The proposed long-term solution for

marine biodiversity conservation in Turkey's marine areas is a reconfigured Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPA) network designed to protect biodiversity while optimizing its ecological service functions – under effective and sustainable adaptive management. Working together with its partners, the GEF project, started in 2009, and is supporting the development of responsible institutions able to prioritize the establishment of new MCPAs and more effectively manage existing MCPAs. The project is also facilitating adequate levels of revenue generation and cost-effective management through the development of an MCPA management system. Finally the project promotes Inter-agency coordination mechanisms to regulate and manage economic activities within multiple use areas of the MCPAs (UNDP, 2009).

Project Achievements

To date, there are major achievements under capacity building, financial sustainability and coordination outcomes. To maintain the sustainability MCPA Training and Implementation Centre was established in Akyaka, Muđla, and the curriculum for the centre is under preparation together with NOAA and WWF Mediterranean. Action Plans of the Marine Species/Habitats and guidelines on Management and Economic Aspects of MPAs prepared by UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA were published in Turkish. Marine Biodiversity Inventory Studies of the Köyceđiz-Dalyan SEPA (Muđla) and Ayvalık Adaları Nature Park (Balıkesir) were finalized in 2010 and 2012 respectively. Socio-economic