



Prespa © Marko Pecarevic / MAVA

SUMMARY
MAVA STRATEGY 2016-2022
MEDITERRANEAN BASIN PROGRAMME

ABOUT MAVA

Founded by Dr. Luc Hoffmann in 1994, MAVA is a Swiss-based philanthropic foundation with a focus on biodiversity conservation. Running three region-based programmes in Switzerland, the Mediterranean and West Africa, and a fourth programme focused on Sustainable Economy, we work through partnerships with international, national and local NGOs, research institutions and universities, and occasionally with government bodies or individuals.

VISION

Biodiversity in our focal regions has improved, we have catalysed a shift towards an economy that ensures human prosperity and a healthy planet, and the conservation community is strong, autonomous and resilient.

MISSION

We conserve biodiversity for the benefit of people and nature by funding, mobilising and strengthening our partners and the conservation community.

PRIORITIES

We work to provide a sustainable future for people and nature, focusing on freshwater and coastal ecosystems, and cultural landscapes.

Working in collaboration with partners, we take an integrated approach, working across sectors, catalysing joint action, strengthening organisations, and engaging tomorrow's conservation leaders.

Our aim is to embed consideration of the value of biodiversity and ecosystems into all levels of decision-making.

TRANSITION

MAVA is in transition and our last year of making grants will be 2022, as planned by our founder many years ago. The family will continue their philanthropic activities individually in their respective main areas of interest.

This has significant implications for the future of our funding relationships with all our partners. All MAVA funding will cease after 2022.

Fortunately, we are in a position to plan for this transition well in advance and, with a new strategic plan in place, we have identified clear goals and will work on fewer priorities for greater impact.

Between now and 2022, we will strengthen our focus on these key priorities, build on our past achievements, and adopt a more holistic approach to meeting societal needs through working for people and nature.

We are excited to continue contributing to important conservation successes with our remaining years of grant-making. This strategy outlines our plans for maximum our impact in the Mediterranean Basin by 2022, and creating dynamics that will ensure the sustainability of our results past that date.

MAVA MEDITERRANEAN BASIN PROGRAMME: CHALLENGES IN THE TRANSITION

Today the MAVA Foundation supports many major conservation initiatives in the Mediterranean region. In transition, our challenge is to secure the future of these initiatives and continued conservation success when we exit as a donor in 2022.

During our phasing out period, scaling up solutions to a pan-Mediterranean level through mainstreaming successful approaches in regional policy and decision-making processes will be critical, as will be clearly demonstrating the value of natural capital in sustainable development.

Simultaneously the few remaining fully functional and highly diverse ecosystems of the region that still lack protection need to be preserved, and the most damaging development diverted away from those areas.

Our new goals and outcomes mix an objective scientific approach to biodiversity conservation with practicality and pragmatism and our desire to leave a strong legacy in the region. Taking account of past learning, we have developed these goals and outcomes through a highly participatory process involving other donors and implementing partners with the aim of facilitating their successful and joint implementation.

MEDITERRANEAN BASIN CONTEXT

With a coastline of 46,000 kilometres, the Mediterranean Sea is the largest enclosed sea on Earth. Its ecological influence extends well beyond the coastline, to include 26 countries from Portugal to Jordan, and its unique landscapes are the product of thousands of years of human development and adaptation to changing environmental conditions.

In this world's biodiversity hotspots with high levels of endemism, loss of biodiversity continues to be a major cause for concern: the region contains a large number of threatened ecosystems and an estimated 1900 globally threatened species. Likewise natural resources are affected. Fish stocks have plummeted, with 95% of fisheries over-exploited and an overly large fishing fleet fuelled by unsustainable policies and subsidies. Freshwater is being abstracted at unsustainable rates, with the situation reaching critical levels in the arid eastern and southern areas. And many traditional farming practices that support unique landscapes are being either abandoned or replaced by intensive agriculture driven by market demand and state subsidies.

Recent economic crises and deregulation agenda in the European Union also put at risk many conservation achievements of the past 30 years. In addition, oil shipping between Europe, North Africa and Asia is triggering harbour and processing facility development, while tourism is expanding rapidly and driving resort development in North Africa and the East Mediterranean.

An ageing rural population and better pay in urban centres in the Northern shore have led to the abandonment of less favoured areas and added to urban sprawl. Currently, many Arab countries in the region are grappling with political changes that present special challenges for natural resource management, civil society development and security. Equally, droughts and extreme weather events driven by climate change are further destabilising the socio-economic context.

Nevertheless, the region shows surprising resilience and dynamism. Civil society organisations born in the Arab Spring are growing steadily stronger, access to information and new business opportunities are spreading rapidly, and a younger better-educated population in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean are seeking opportunities for change.

The majority of countries in the north of the region are part of the European Union and share common economic and environmental policy frameworks while most countries of the southern and eastern part of the Mediterranean are members of the Arab League. For all, the realisation that ecosystem services and regional security are closely linked means pan-Mediterranean co-operation and collaboration on sustainable development is likely to become increasingly important.

OVERVIEW & RATIONALE

We will support conservation through four habitat targets covering freshwater (coastal wetlands and river basins), marine (seagrass meadows and coralligenous beds) and terrestrial biomes (landscapes of high ecological value maintained by human practices) and two species targets (covering large predatory fish targeted by artisanal fisheries, lynxes, sea turtles, vultures, migratory birds).

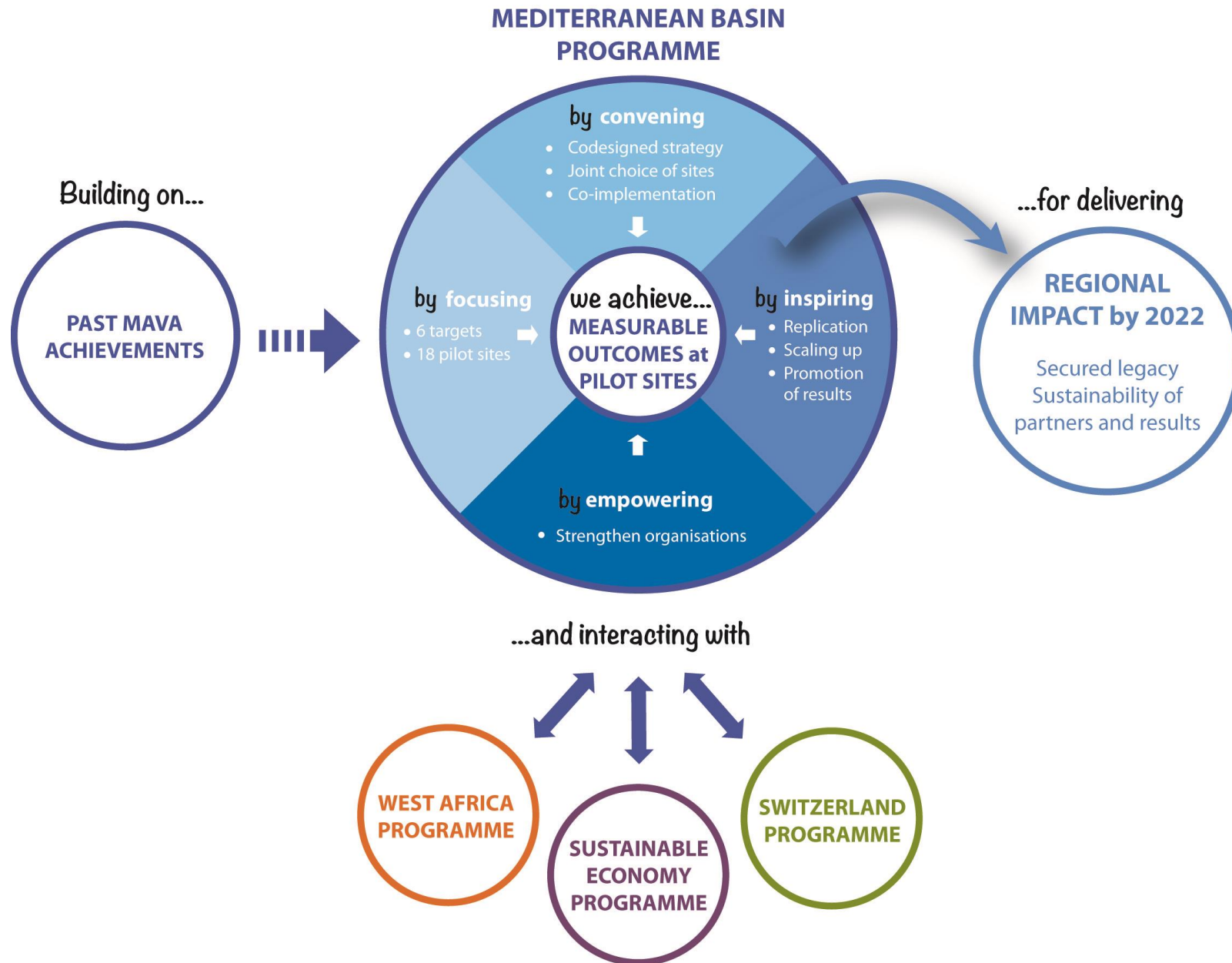
Coastal wetlands are essential for the conservation of many species and are amongst the most critically threatened habitats in the region, while functional key river basins secure the ever more scarce water for people and nature. Landscapes maintained by centuries of human activity support unique plant and animal diversity. Sea grass meadows and coralligenous beds are the two most productive and biodiverse coastal habitats. And our focal species groups (that we have supported for years) are not only endangered but also play a vital role in ecosystem integrity and wider conservation.

The size of the Mediterranean region means that we cannot be active everywhere. Our approach will be to demonstrate tangible impact in a number of demonstration sites that typify the range of threats and conservation opportunities we have identified, and which offer the potential for solutions to be developed by 2022 and replicated regionally. Criteria for selecting sites will include feasibility, potential synergies with other MAVA programmes, interest from other donors and/or implementing partners, and our past involvement. In each site we will develop an integrated approach and clearly demonstrate that proper valuation of natural capital and effective resource management are the basis for long-term regional stability and sustainable development.

Besides working at demonstration sites we will continue funding conservation in priority areas such as the Prespa Lakes, the Camargue and Doñana. In these places and elsewhere, a strong focus will be on preventing damaging development and the potential establishment of new protected areas.

Replication and upscaling of successful approaches, both old and new, through the development of networks, the involvement of key implementing and funding partners, and the pursuit of supportive regional policies and regulations will be critical.

While we do not explicitly address climate change in our strategy, we will continue to take it into account in our work (e.g., through conserving ecosystems that mitigate local climate change impacts) given it poses a major threat to the resilience of Mediterranean ecosystems. This approach will be supported through integration with our Sustainable Economy programme which addresses climate change through natural capital valuation, greening the financial sector, and resource efficiency and the pursuit of a low carbon economy.



TARGETS, GOALS & LONG-TERM VISION

1. Freshwater – key basins and aquifers & coastal and island wetlands

Our **long-term vision** is a Mediterranean with fully functional freshwater ecosystems rich in biodiversity and providing a wealth of ecosystem services. As the demand for water increases due to population growth, agriculture, tourism, and climate change, freshwater ecosystem resilience and functionality are being reduced or destroyed. Ensuring that minimum environmental flows to sustain rivers, lakes and wetlands are agreed before abstraction, is necessary.

Our **goal for 2022** is to maintain or restore environmental flows in key freshwater basins and coastal and island wetlands. We aim to provide through demonstration at our pilot sites inspirational examples triggering improvement across the region beyond 2022.

2. Coastal habitats – coastal wetlands, seagrass and coralligenous beds

Our **long-term vision** is a Mediterranean with highly diverse and fully functional coastal habitats able to support local communities (including artisanal fishers and those dependent on tourism). To progress towards this vision an integrated approach that considers terrestrial and marine environments as part of a single system is needed.

In line with the objectives of the Barcelona Convention, our **goals for 2022** are to maintain or increase the area of healthy coastal and marine habitats, ensuring connectivity amongst marine and terrestrial parts of the coastal system, and to increase productivity of seagrasses and diversity of coralligenous habitats.

3. Terrestrial biomes – landscapes of high ecological value maintained by human practices

Our **long-term vision** is a Mediterranean in which beneficial practices such as transhumance, agdal of North Africa and hima of the Near East are recognised and contribute to the maintenance of large areas of diverse Mediterranean landscape. The dynamic between these practices and the biodiversity-rich landscapes and livelihoods they support needs to be restored. The overall concept can also be applied to modern agricultural practices that sustainably use resources and benefit biodiversity.

Our **goal for 2022** is to increase the surface area of selected cultural landscapes of high ecological value to demonstrate the sustainability of specific practices and the benefits for the rural economy.

4. Fisheries – high trophic level fish species targeted by artisanal fisheries

Our **long-term vision** is a Mediterranean with healthy fish populations and artisanal fisheries. Predatory fish such as sea bream, sea bass, groupers, swordfish, tuna and shark are highly sought after by local professional and recreational fishermen, and are consequently the most threatened. Reduction in population numbers of these top predators destabilises whole marine ecosystems and negatively impacts fishery resources for local communities.

Our **goal for 2022** is to increase the abundance of these fish species in selected geographies.

5. Priority species – large carnivore lynxes, sea turtles, vultures, migratory birds

Our **long-term vision** is a Mediterranean with healthy populations of lynxes, sea turtles, vultures and migratory birds, each with a good conservation status. Our approach is to improve habitat and reduce intentional and accidental killing. At a regional level we will tackle widespread activities that cause mortality (e.g., illegal hunting of migratory birds, collision with power lines, poisoning, poaching). At demonstration sites, we will address specific conservation needs of the endangered emblematic species present.

Our **goals for 2022** is an improvement in overall regional trends in populations of migratory birds, vultures, lynxes, and sea turtles, and in the conservation status of endangered emblematic species at selected sites.

1. Sustainable water use

Abstraction is the main threat to freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean. From 1967 to 2011 available per capita freshwater resources in several countries fell by an estimated 60% due to increasing human population, destruction of freshwater ecosystems and decreased precipitation. Region-wide, 64% of abstracted water is used for agriculture, with higher usage in the south and east where water demand for irrigation is double found in Mediterranean EU countries. Industry (including the energy and tourism sectors) and domestic use represent 22% and 14% respectively. Additional impacts come from agricultural pollution and water infrastructure development.

By 2022, we aim to reduce overuse of water (by agriculture, industry and households) in three demonstration sites, and to promote sustainable water use and minimise construction and poor management of water control structures in three river basins (outcomes).

Activities will include: increasing technical capacity of organisations working on freshwater issues; building sustainability criteria into financial support for infrastructure projects; defining and implementing criteria for hydropower 'no-go' areas; securing minimum required environmental flows for demonstration sites; promoting best practice; addressing water governance and promoting community-based water management; supporting Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM)/Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM); and raising awareness about the value of natural freshwater systems.

2. Sustainable coastal development

In the Mediterranean, more than half the population lives in coastal areas, potentially increasing to three quarters by 2025. With tourism focused on coastal areas, unsustainable coastal development is a major threat to coastal ecosystems affecting critical habitats and resources on which local communities depend. Climate change impacts are also more severe in coastal zones. Consequences are numerous but wetlands in particular are amongst the most sensitive and impacted habitats.

Establishing effective governance and adequate protection for coastal habitats is a challenge in many countries, and narrow sectoral approaches lead to unsustainable development plans. Resilience and productivity of coastal habitats need to be strengthened for the benefit of local communities, and threats to ecosystem connectivity and functionality reduced.

By 2022, we aim to reduce impacts of coastal development on wetlands and critical coastal marine habitats through an integrated approach in three coastal geographies (outcome).

Activities across three demonstration sites will include: demonstrating the value of ecosystem services; supporting sustainable planning processes, including integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), and civil society participation; advocacy for improvement in existing plans; protecting more sensitive critical areas from disturbance by limiting certain types of development through effective legislation and enforcement; and advocacy for green investment.

3. Sustainable fishing practices

Fishing is currently highly unsustainable in the Mediterranean with 95% of fish stocks over-exploited and demand for fish much higher than the region's productive capacity. Unfortunately, for socio-cultural and political reasons, fleet capacity is maintained at unsustainable levels and unsustainable fishing is one of the principal threats to coastal habitats and vulnerable key species.

Artisanal fisheries operating in coastal areas have the greatest potential for sustainability and we will focus on marine biodiversity hotspots where artisanal fisheries are particularly important for local livelihoods, and promote the adoption and replication of successful approaches at regional level.

By 2022, we will reduce fishing pressure on the most endangered and important (for ecosystem balance) high trophic level fish species targeted by artisanal fishermen, reduce impacts of selected fisheries on key coastal habitats (seagrass meadows, coralligenous beds) by fishing gear, and reduce bycatch of vulnerable species of sharks, marine mammals, sea turtles and seabirds (outcomes).

Activities will include: research on fisheries impact; promotion of best practice for sustainable livelihoods, selective fishing gear and certification; influencing consumer behaviour; supporting civil society participation in relevant fora; strengthening NGO, fisher organisation, and artisanal fishery manager capacity; and supporting protection and management of critical resources and areas.

4. Beneficial land use practices

Abandonment of beneficial land use practices such as transhumance and terrace cultivation that have shaped the Mediterranean natural environment over millennia can result in massive biodiversity loss. Intensification in favour of traditional approaches is rarely sustainable.

By 2022, we will halt the loss of beneficial traditional land use practices in three selected landscapes and demonstrate their valuable role supporting both biodiversity conservation and modern day green development (outcome).

Activities will include: documenting which practices best support conservation; building practitioner capacity and skill; strengthening supportive laws, governance systems and access rights; supporting economic and social viability of practices by increasing market value of produced goods; facilitating social integration of practitioners; and promoting the ecological and economic value of practices with decision-makers and potential practitioners.

5. Priority species

Amongst the many human activities that result in heavy species mortality, four strongly affect species groups that MAVA has been supporting for years. Illegal killing affects 25 million birds each year as they migrate between nesting and wintering grounds. Collisions with power lines and wind turbines come a close second as a threat to migratory species. Illegally placed poisoned bait, as well as livestock carcasses loaded with dangerous veterinary drugs, threaten populations of vultures and large predators such as lynxes. Collection of turtle eggs affects green and loggerhead turtle reproductive success in critical nesting beaches of the south and eastern Mediterranean.

By 2022, we will minimise or eliminate direct human causes of mortality (illegal killing, infrastructure collision, poisoning and collection of turtle eggs) throughout the Mediterranean region (outcome).

Activities will include: advocacy for appropriate legal frameworks at EU and national levels; enforcement of effective existing legislation; development and/or implementation of technical solutions; promotion of hunting bans and limitations on energy infrastructure development in critical areas.

MAGNIFICATION

Given the size of the Mediterranean, successful approaches and results developed in demonstration sites will need scaling and magnifying to create impact at regional level and deliver on our strategy.

Activities designed to enable scaling and magnification will include: promotion of results and solutions, including through existing bodies able to support replication; developing awareness and building stakeholder capacity; advocacy for mainstreaming approaches through sectorial practice and legal frameworks.

Magnification is core to our strategy and efforts to put in place effective mechanisms for delivery will begin immediately. We will focus initially on replication of current projects and approaches, shifting to our new outcomes once activities are underway and successful approaches have been demonstrated.

To jump-start the process, we plan to support implementation of the Ramsar Convention resolution on Conservation of Mediterranean Island Wetlands, adopted in June 2015.

IMPLICATIONS

Our 2016-2022 strategy is focused on achieving specific outcomes. As of 2016 all new projects will need to contribute directly to at least one of our strategic outcomes, and conform to dual location and thematic criteria to be eligible for support.

Our new strategy is also more geographically defined and a maximum of three sites, landscapes or marine geographies will be selected per outcome with regional impact being secured through replication and magnification. We will facilitate closer collaboration and co-ordination between implementing partners with a view to delivering on strategic outcomes in demonstration sites.

Our relationship with programmatic partners will be closer and we will look for their specific and measureable contributions to our strategic outcomes resulting in a significant shift in how funds are allocated as contracts come up for renewal.

We will engage more actively than in the past with other donors to seek co-funding and ensure viability of our partners and outcomes.

Finally, there will be very little flexibility to accept unsolicited project proposals

IMPLEMENTATION

We will launch the implementation of our ambitious Mediterranean strategy outcomes by outcomes throughout 2016. Each will require significant involvement and shaping on our part.

For each habitat target and our marine fish species target we will commission studies to facilitate demonstration site selection.

Once studies are complete, we will convene workshops with selected partners and select sites for each outcome. Our aim will be to select demonstration sites across the region for maximum impact. During the workshops, we will also develop an integrated action plan for each outcome. These action plans will set out roles and responsibilities of partners and identify any resource and capacity gaps that need to be filled. Action plans will later be tailored to the specificity of each site.

For our pan-Mediterranean species target, no preliminary study will be conducted as key sites and geographies are already known. We will directly convene implementing partners to work on developing integrated action plans for addressing each of the threats highlighted in our strategy to our species target groups.