



DONORS' INITIATIVE FOR MEDITERRANEAN FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS

PROTECTING AND RESTORING MEDITERRANEAN FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS

FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: IN CRITICAL NEED OF PROTECTION

The Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems (DIMFE) builds on the legacy and experience of foundations with a long tradition of supporting freshwater conservation.

The protection of freshwater ecosystems is one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century. These ecosystems are home to 12% of all known species and provide a wide variety of ecosystem services. For example, they contribute to human well-being by providing drinking water and irrigation for crops. They also provide nature-based solutions: their protection and restoration can help regulate our climate and protect against floods, droughts or coastal storms.

Freshwater organisms have an extinction rate four to six times higher than marine organisms. Since 1993, freshwater vertebrate populations have declined by an average of 28% within the Mediterranean basin. Today, 36% of the remaining species are endangered (Tour du Valat, 2021).

Conservation measures through local, national and regional action as well as international cooperation are needed to combat these threats and ensure the proper management of these ecosystems.

Because there is an urgent need to act to protect these fragile ecosystems, the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, the MAVA Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation decided to join forces to intervene specifically on the issues of conservation and restoration by creating the Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems (DIMFE).

After a first call for projects and the support of six concrete projects in the field, new donors and partners are invited to join DIMFE. Together we can expand our reach and our impact.

MAIN THREATS

Agriculture

Many areas have been converted to agricultural use



Development

Urbanisation and industrialisation contribute to the destruction of many ecosystems



Hydrological changes

Dams and dykes reduce nature's ability to regulate itself



Sedimentation et erosion

Vegetation is essential for keeping rivers clear



Pollution

Agriculture, industry and urbanisation pollute and damage biodiversity and reduce the resilience of natural processes



Invasive species

Alien species can compete with native species and perturb ecosystems



Climate crisis

Climate change damages freshwater ecosystems





ZOOM ON FUNDED PROJECTS

In **Albania**, the plans to construct an international airport in the Vjosa Delta, within the Vjosë-Nartë protected area, is threatening a site internationally recognised for its beauty and rich biodiversity, home to more than 200 species of birds such as the flamingo and the pelican. The NGO **Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA)** plans to expand the Civil Society Coalition against the airport construction and to carry out lobbying and advocacy actions to stop the project and to improve the management of this protected area including the conservation of the bird species present, and the restoration of their habitats.

In **Malta**, the Environment and Resources Authority has developed a management plan to preserve the Salini wetlands. **Birdlife Malta** will rehabilitate a freshwater wetland in this natural reserve and subsequently create an educational area. The aim is to ensure the complete protection of this freshwater ecosystem and to restore this important habitat.

Livanjsko polje in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is designated by Ramsar as a Wetland of International Importance and an Important Bird Area, but its value is not recognized at national level. **EuroNatur Foundation** and partners are working for its official national recognition as a fully protected area, thus strengthening the sustainable management of the area. The project also includes restoration and conservation measures, as well as awareness-raising activities.

Without proper management, freshwater ecosystems in the **Croatian** karst mountains are bound to disappear which would have significant impacts on biodiversity. **Association BIOM** and its partners are working together to provide solutions to assess the current state of these ecosystems and to develop a methodology to restore ten priority sites. Awareness-raising activities will also be implemented to ensure their long-term conservation.



KEY FIGURES



6 PROJECTS
IN 2022

2 100 000 € COMMITTED

6 COUNTRIES
INVOLVED

The iconic natural site of the Prespa lakes, shared by **Greece**, Albania and Northern Macedonia, is a crucial freshwater site for the three countries. Today, the various riparian zones around Prespa face rapid degradation due to numerous threats. The **Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP)** seeks to improve knowledge and understanding of the ecological roles, threats and value of the rivers and riparian habitats of the Greek part of Prespa. Concrete actions to rehabilitate these areas and raise awareness among stakeholders, authorities and local populations will be implemented.

The Sebou Water Fund was initiated in **Morocco** in 2019. It is a sustainable funding mechanism that benefits local communities responsible for natural resource management in the upper Sebou basin. Through local NGOs, the Fund has implemented projects on water conservation, sustainable agricultural practices and implemented socio-economic development and capacity building. It is the first fund of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa and the second on the African continent. This project ensures social ownership and the ability to finance freshwater ecosystem conservation projects by local stakeholders. Initially launched in the Upper Sebou sub-basin, **Living Planet Morocco (LPM)** will work to extend this Fund to cover the entire basin.





WHAT'S NEXT?

Freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean are essential for the ecosystem services and nature-based solutions they provide. To enable a more effective and strategic action, collaboration among funders and among actors in the field is crucial to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems and prevent their decline.

For this reason, DIMFE's founding members wish to expand the Initiative and welcome new private or public actors interested in joining DIMFE to conserve, together, freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean.

Joining DIMFE will allow your organisation to:

- Benefit from a proven and effective operational mechanism,
- Substantially increase its funding capacity through pooling resources,
- Unite around a common vision and gain greater visibility,
- Contribute to supporting concrete and sustainable projects and develop DIMFE's network to strengthen its impact in the field.

Join us to maximise DIMFE's impact.

JOIN US!

ABOUT THE DONORS' INITIATIVE FOR MEDITERRANEAN FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS (DIMFE)

The Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems (DIMFE) was created in 2021 by three founding members: the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, the MAVA Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

DIMFE focuses on the conservation and restoration of freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity in the Mediterranean basin. The Initiative aims to support projects with strong impact in the field.

In 2021, after the launch of DIMFE at the World Conservation Congress in Marseille in the presence of His Serene Highness the Prince Albert II of Monaco, the first call for projects to protect Mediterranean freshwater ecosystems was launched.

DIMFE ACTIONS

- Regular calls for projects
- Support of the 6 first projects in 2022
- 6 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Malta, Morocco)
- 2 100 000 EUR committed

The Initiative relies on a network of experts from the Mediterranean Water Institute who assess the projects supported and advises the Initiative in its actions and communications strategy.

For the next call for projects, which will open in the second half of 2022, a budget of 2 million euros is currently planned.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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