



### WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE PROJECT?

The WetMainAreas project will support policy and action plans on wetland ecosystems, with special focus on small wetlands, by integrating scientific knowledge and innovative satellite technology into guidance documents, available to everybody and thus improve the capacity of authorities, spatial planners, and developers to take informed decisions and to cooperate towards ecosystem integration and sustainability. The project will also contribute to sustainable tourism development in wetlands and thus improve the welfare of local communities.

**Interreg**   
EUROPEAN UNION  
**Balkan-Mediterranean**  
**WetMainAreas**



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 THE GOULANDRIS NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM  
GREEK BIOTOPE/WETLAND CENTRE



 Agjencia Kombëtare  
e Mjedisit



 HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
REGION OF THESSALY  
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING



 MINISTRY OF  
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PROJECT  
**IMPROVING THE CONSERVATION  
EFFECTIVENESS OF WETLANDS**

Project co-funded by the European Union and  
National funds of the participating countries

## WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

The WetMainAreas project was launched in September 2017 under the Transnational Cooperation Programme Balkan-Mediterranean 2014-2020 with the main goal to contribute to the protection, conservation and development of wetlands, as a shared asset of the Balkan Mediterranean (BalkanMed) territory. It is carried out by partner institutions from 4 different countries, which will help overcome national borders and build shared knowledge on biodiversity and transnational ecosystems on the Balkans. The methodology of the project combines nature conservation and satellite technology for the creation of interactive geoportal on harmonized wetland inventory of the BalkanMed territory.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The Balkan-Mediterranean territory shares natural environment of high biodiversity value including lake complexes, riverine systems and inland and coastal wetlands, many of which include important cultural heritage. The territory sums a total of 2.126 sq km of Ramsar sites and of 86230sq km of NATURA 2000 sites. Common problems arise from inefficient use of resources, pollution and fragmentation, which coupled with the impacts of climate change, has gradually led to reduced availability of water and to degradation. Low implementation of EU directives as well as regional disparities in policies and action plans hinder the implementation of joint ecosystem and biodiversity management techniques and development of sustainable tourism approaches. WetMainAreas addresses adequately the transnational challenge by promoting ecological connectivity and transnational ecosystems' integration focusing on wetland conservation and scientific policy improvement.

## WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED RESULTS?

The project's expected results are:

- Mapping and assessment of wetland ecosystems as key landscape features, and analysis of their connectivity with protected networks across the whole BalkanMed territory in order to contribute to the EU biodiversity policy demand for a coherent NATURA 2000 network.
- Update on the status of wetlands over the BalkanMed territory, especially of small wetlands that often are ignored, in order to Improve the existing scientific knowledge (satellite-derived maps with Sentinel-2 images and in-situ measurements), and support their conservation through local and regional spatial planning.
- Demonstration at 4 pilot sites of joined-up wetland conservation techniques to enhance ecological connectivity and transnational ecosystems' integration. Pilots are selected agglomerations of designated sites (i.e national parks, Ramsar sites, NATURA 2000 sites).
- Improvement of wetland conservation policies in the BalkanMed territory. Support

to competent authorities to enforce national legislation with special focus on small wetlands outside protected areas, and cooperate for transnational action plans to promote wetland natural and cultural heritage.

- Increase in the visibility of BalkanMed wetlands' role in ecological connectivity and transnational ecosystem integration of designated areas (national parks, NATURA 2000 sites, Ramsar sites).

