



# Protecting breeding sites for sea turtles



(c) Hellio-Van Ingen

Since prehistoric times humans have exploited sea turtles. This has led to large population declines and to local extinctions. The seven surviving species of sea turtles are listed under the IUCN Red List either as “vulnerable”, “endangered” or “critically endangered”.

The West African region is of global importance for sea turtles. Some of the world's largest populations of loggerhead turtle breed in Cabo Verde and of green turtle in Guinea-Bissau. These populations are threatened by predation by invasive species, illegal harvesting of females and their eggs, bycatch by industrial and artisanal fishing vessels, and the decline in nesting habitat area or quality due to coastal erosion, flooding, and unregulated tourism practices.

The action plan will cover a mix of enhanced law enforcement, land use planning, awareness raising and participation of local communities in turtle conservation work, better management of MPAs, and legal protection of some key nesting beaches still unprotected.

*"Site-specific conservation actions are not sufficient to protect migratory species like sea turtles. Ecoregion-wide conservation approaches are critical for an effective protection."*

Marie Madeleine Gomez, Manager, West Africa Programme, MAVA

## WHAT ARE OUR GEOGRAPHICAL INTERVENTION AREAS?



Our partners will mostly focus their efforts in

- Mauritania: Banc d'Arguin National Park
- Cabo Verde: Islands of Boa Vista and Maio
- Guinea-Bissau : Bijagos Archipelago - National Marine Park of João Vieira and Poilão (PNMJVP), and the Orango National Park (PNO)

### SPECIES THREATENED

Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) in Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania & loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in Cabo Verde



### HABITATS THREATENED

Sandy beaches & islands in Guinea-Bissau & Cabo Verde





### HOW WE THINK CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

The strategies and their key results - also called « results chain » in technical terms, were defined according to the Open Standards for the practice in conservation. A summary is presented below.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Research and capacity building

2. Raising awareness

3. Strengthening the legal and regulatory framework of turtle protection

4. Strengthening law and regulation enforcement

5. Strengthening site protection and restoration

#### EXPECTED KEY RESULTS

Effective management of existing MPAs with priority breeding site

Effective surveillance and monitoring of priority breeding sites inside and outside MPAs all along the nesting season

Populations resident in MPAs consider the nesting turtles as a resource to protect

Knowledge on mortality, breeding success, migration routes, key staging areas & population connectivity of nesting populations

#### WE AIM TO:

Eradicate disturbance and illegal harvesting on important breeding sites for green & loggerhead turtles

Minimize the impacts of natural and anthropogenic habitat disturbances at these breeding sites

### HOW THE ACTION PLAN WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

MAVA's support and the involvement of other international partners is an opportunity to reinforce local skills, and to promote and encourage local students achieving advanced degrees, as improving local capacities is of utmost importance in terms of sustainability. The implementation of the action plan is therefore based on a strong promotion of local leadership and coordination. International partners like the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Conselho Superior de Investigação Científica (CSIC), Turtle Foundation (TF), and some foreign universities play a vital role in the implementation of the action plan, but most of the contractual partners are from the region (e.g. PNBA in Mauritania, IBAP in Guinea-Bissau, Fundação Maio Biodiversidade (FMB), and Fundação Tartaruga (FT) in Cabo Verde).

No particular cross-cutting governance mechanism will be set at the regional level; however, collaboration and exchanges of information and experiences will be enhanced among the three countries through annual meetings. Joint communication and mutual learning will be improved, by leveraging existing coordination mechanisms at national level, such as the TAOLA network in Cabo Verde.

### PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

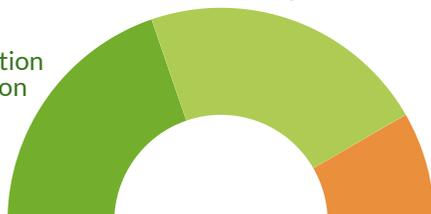


### BUDGET 2020-2022

Total budget EUR 4.7 million

Co-financing EUR 2 million

MAVA allocation EUR 1.9 million



Co-financing to be found EUR 800'000

### LINKS WITH OTHER MAVA ACTION PLANS



AO 4: Oil & Gas  
AO 6: Seagrass  
AO 7: Reducing bycatch



M7: Turtles - Mediterranean

