



Marine Ecosystem Restoration
in Changing European Seas

Polytechnic University of Marche

MERCES project has explored the potential of restoration actions in shallow soft and hard bottoms (including mesophotic) and deep-sea habitats at pan-European scale, from Norway to Turkey. MERCES is giving a special attention on the most fragile and vulnerable habitats, including seagrass meadows, algal and kelp forests, coralligenous outcrops, cold-water corals, canyons, seamounts and fjords in 25 different pilot areas. More than 20 protocols (species translocation and transplanting, seedling and grazer removal, artificial biodegradable substrates) for restoration have been tested to increase restoration efficiency and to identify the criteria for the selection of target species and habitats.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Marine, Coastal, Fluvial Management

OPPORTUNITIES

PROJECT

MERCES - Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas

MERCES project has explored the potential of restoration actions in shallow waters and on deep-sea habitats at pan-European scale, from Norway to Turkey, implementing a systemic approach to deliver tangible benefits on European Green Deal actions for climate (mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction), biodiversity, health and wellbeing. Restoration studies have focused, through pilot actions, on the most fragile and vulnerable habitats, including seagrass meadows, algal and kelp forests, coralligenous outcrops, cold-water corals, canyons, seamounts and fjords in 25 different pilot areas. More than 20 protocols have been tested to increase restoration efficiency and to identify the criteria for the selection of target species and habitats. Both, the success as well as failures of the MERCES pilot restoration actions allowed the identification of best practice for restoration and have clearly established the methodologies that can contribute to the development of a restoration industry, given the major extent of degraded marine habitats in the European seas. MERCES demonstrated that marine restoration is feasible under a number of conditions and that baseline knowledge, synergistic interventions (mitigation and conservation) and stakeholder involvement are crucial for the restoration success. The involvement of selected stakeholders, if adequately planned and supported by experts, is critical to increase public

awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the need for their involvement in large-scale restoration interventions. The lessons learned from the MERCES project can have a profound impact on the future of marine restoration in Europe, and given the dimension of degraded marine habitats in European seas support the development of a dedicated business. Despite this, the gaps between terrestrial and marine ecosystems are still evident and marine restoration requires further support for becoming convenient and effective. In particular, a crucial point is the definition of the costs and the potential for scaling up of marine restoration, in either coastal areas and in the deep sea. MERCES is a multidisciplinary consortium composed by 28 Partners from 16 Countries with skills in marine ecology, spatial modelling, marine ecosystem restoration, law, policy and governance, socio-economics, knowledge transfer, dissemination and communication, from the multifaceted worlds of business, academia, research and environmental association. Contact: Cristina Gambi <https://www.ecca21.eu/participants/359>
Official website of the project: <http://www.merces-project.eu>

Applies to

Climate science, Marine, coastal, fluvial management, Biodiversity, ecosystem restoration, ecosystem services



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ECCA 2021 - Climate Adaptation solutions – MERCES

Video https://youtu.be/3e_CjKNOIXE

