

# Integrated management of a marine and terrestrial protected area, Portovenere - IT

## 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space

## 2. Key Approaches

- Integration

## 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Implementation of measures to defend a coastal and marine protected area, enhancing the importance of the sea bottom marine ecosystems, the tourist use of the territory, and the fishing activities. Strengthening the importance of the development of the "Centre for Studies and Higher Education"

## 4. Overview of the case

The creation of a marine protected area, the first at regional level, is very significant not only for the protection of the sea bottom, but also for managing human pressures and the different uses of the sea, also in the surrounding area. The sea around Portovenere is a significant example of the many activities related to the sea and the difficulty of avoiding conflicts of uses: in the inner part of the Gulf there are industrial activities (shipbuilding for pleasure boats in Le Grazie and Fezzano) activities for the production of energy (a re-gasification terminal in Panigaglia bay), Naval activities (in Varignano and Santa Maria); outside the Gulf and around the main municipality and Palmaria island, there are numerous concessions for mussel and fish farms, recreational boating activities (in the area are most boaters of the Gulf of Spezia, within the river Magra and the Tuscan Versilia coast, areas with very high density of recreational boats).

## 5. Context and Objectives

### a) Context

Portovenere is a small town in the province of La Spezia. Its territory corresponds to the extreme edge of the Ligurian coastal arc and lies at the intersection of the open sea and the Gulf of Spezia. A few small villages, close to the inlets, are, together with Portovenere, in the same municipality: Fezzano, Le Grazie and the islands of Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto. Its geographical position, the natural characteristics, the city structure and its historical buildings make Portovenere, one of the most interesting spots on the Ligurian coast. There are still perfectly visible marks left by the activity of marble extraction of "portoro" (black marble with yellow-gold veins), now exhausted, with the excavation front scattered in different parts of the municipal territory, providing an additional feature to the landscape strongly shaped by human activity. Because of that, the area has been protected by the Liguria Region: In 1985, it was included in the protected area called "Bracco Mesco / Cinque Terre / Montemarcello"; then in 2001, the Regional Natural Park of Porto Venere was created.

The Park covers 314 hectares, of which 276 are a Protected Area, and presents natural values of interest in different disciplines: geology, caving, paleontology, botany, ornithology, herpetology. The park from the beginning was connected to the marine protected area, which includes the south-west area of the Palmaria island, and the islands of Tino and Tinetto, and Posidonia seagrass meadows in the channel that separates Porto Venere to Palmaria Island. The area included in the Marine Park covers 131.72 hectares. In this stretch of coast you can find the main ecosystems of the Mediterranean Sea, established on different types of sea bottom: sandy, rocky and Posidonia meadow. They are rich in animal and plant, related to different

morphology aspects of the sea bottom.

## **b) Objectives**

To implement a series of actions, planned by the Landscape Plan, which will lead to an environmental and landscape re-development of this coastal and marine area

## **6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)**

### **a) Project Management**

The management of both protected areas, marine and land, has been transferred from the Region to municipality. In 1997 Portovenere was included among UNESCO World Heritage sites.

### **b) ICZM Tools**

Portovenere, as well as all coastal resorts, has not escaped the pressure of real estate which has also recently spread to the hill slopes with replacement of agricultural crops from the olive groves that are a dominant feature of the landscape. A building, built directly on the coast of Palmaria island, on a site not particularly valuable as a former quarry yard, but very visible, gave rise to the most famous story in Portovenere in recent years: the demolition of the building, the so-called "Scheletrone" (big skeleton), and the recovery of the area. "Scheletrone" was a concrete structure, intended for the erection of a residential building, which construction phase has been blocked for almost thirty years, waiting for the establishment of administrative procedures designed to revoke the building permit. In 1999, the landscape plan of the region strengthened the protection on the island and laid the basis for the launch of the acts required for demolition of the structure. It took another 10 years and the joint action of the Superintendent Region and of the City to decide on the demolition, which occurred in May 2009. Materials resulting from the demolition will remain in situ: the area will be reclaimed as a green area. Public funding included also the natural re-development of the path between the area of Scheletrone and the quay of the ferry tour, which will also be re-developed and made accessible to tourism. At the same time, a number of buildings and land estate, formerly military-owned property on Palmaria Island, are being acquired by the municipality, and will be included in the park. Regarding other actions underway or being planned are:

- The development of public transportation by sea: access by boat to Portovenere and the Islands, as well as other locations in the Gulf of Spezia (such as the Cinque Terre) is the best way to reduce the pressure of tourist motorway traffic.
- Initiatives for promoting tourism: such as the event inaugurated in 2008, providing the closure for one day to the shipping of sea between Portovenere and Palmaria island. The basin is thus left available to swimmers, turning it into a huge natural swimming pool.
- Research and environmental education: In addition to the activities already undertaken in the Park, a "Centre for Studies and Higher Education" is going to be launched, in co-operation with the research institutions active in the territory, such as the NATO Undersea Research Centre, in which the University of Pisa, Genoa and Parma will be involved, and which will work in collaboration with the District for marine technologies just founded in La Spezia. In particular, the area of Porto Venere aims to become a site to assess the environmental aspects of research activities, to test the various instruments and to define a protocol on the co-operation between research and protected area management (i.e. addressing the management tools that the research should provide to the parks and marine protection areas).

## **7. Cost and resources**

The recovery of the "Scheletrone" area (planning, land expropriation, building demolition, re-development has been possible thanks to a public financing of €1.900.000 (€650.000 from the Region and the remaining from the national government).

## **8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)**

The actions planned by the Landscape Plan have been extremely important for the environmental and landscape re-development of this coastal and marine area, but also for the social and economic revitalisation thanks to the creation of the "Centre for Studies and Higher Education" and to the main tourist events promoted.

## **9. Success and Fail factors**

The integration of management of both the marine and terrestrial protected area represents a successful element for the development and application of ICZM policies.

## **10. Unforeseen outcomes**

More actions have to be planned at regional and local level in order to avoid real estate damages.

## **11. Prepared by**

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## **13. Sources**

- [www.scheletrone.it](http://www.scheletrone.it)
- [www.parconaturaleportovenere.it](http://www.parconaturaleportovenere.it)