



## Introduction – What is LIFE BaħAR

The LIFE BaħAR for N2K project aims to collect data, identify potential Sites of Community Importance (pSCI), develop conservation objectives for pSCIs, increase participation and coordination of stakeholders and increase awareness on the Natura 2000 marine protected areas and marine habitats.

### Overview

The marine environment is an important natural resource which is utilised by many different stakeholders. To be able to continue benefiting from the ecosystem services that the sea provides, it is essential that this resource is protected and managed sustainably. In order to achieve this, participation from all stakeholders is essential. Each stakeholder can contribute by using best practice in their activities when operating in Maltese coastal and offshore waters. Some examples of best practices are recommended here for stakeholders to take into account.

### Examples of best practices within Marine Protected Areas

1. Any form of waste should be disposed of in an appropriate manner.
2. Fishing gear should not be discarded at sea.
3. If fishing gear becomes entangled with the seabed, this should be retrieved where possible, as it could cause significant harm to the marine ecosystem.
4. If fishing gear becomes entangled with the seabed habitats and cannot be retrieved, a report is to be submitted to relevant authorities.
5. Where possible, biodegradable material should be used to reduce impacts from lost/abandoned fishing gear.
6. Fishing gear should be employed (utilised) in such a manner to reduce bycatch.
7. Fishers can contribute to data collection on the marine environment and assist injured protected species, thereby being stewards of the seas.
8. Water sport and boat trip operators and owners should respect the integrity of caves and not disturb wildlife and marine species found in and around such natural features.
9. Divers should only enter particular caves if they have the necessary experience and training, and should avoid highly diverse and sensitive caves.
10. The number of divers visiting caves on a daily basis should be recorded and limited by the dive schools and centres.
11. Information should be made available in relation to cave features and diver experience grade requirements, during diver training and at dive site locations.
12. Permanent ecological moorings can be installed in particular sensitive zones for use by various stakeholders.

