



BLUE TOURISM INITIATIVE

Call for Projects

Small Grants towards Sustainable Blue Tourism in Lebanon MPAs

IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

Introduction

The [Blue Tourism Initiative](#) (BTI) aims to understand and evaluate the environmental impacts of coastal and marine tourism at the international level to identify enabling conditions for the integration of environmental planning and sustainable management strategies. The project is implemented by five partners, including the IUCN Mediterranean Centre for Cooperation (IUCN-Med), and started formally in April 2024, and will end in June 2026.

This initiative aims to promote a holistic vision of marine and coastal tourism management in line with global efforts to deliver the 2030 Agenda for marine regions. It supports exchanges of knowledge, good practices, projects, and experiences between three major marine regions sharing environmental and social challenges related to coastal and maritime tourism: the Mediterranean, the Western Indian Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

This initiative aims to improve the governance of coastal and marine tourism to ensure sustainable, inclusive and resilient development, and address the associated environmental, health, socio-cultural and economic challenges. The potential benefits of this initiative are significant and promising. It is based on a bottom-up approach through demonstrative actions at local pilot sites, which are then integrated into global and regional sustainability strategies.

As part of the project partnership, IUCN-Med is in charge of the activities in the Mediterranean region, developing a Mediterranean Blue Tourism Diagnosis report and coordinating pilot activities in Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia. In Lebanon, IUCN-Med is supporting the development of sustainable blue tourism at three pilot sites:

- **Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR)**
- **Palm Island Nature Reserve (PINR)**
- **Anfeh Salt Pans**

IUCN-Med, via the Blue Tourism Initiative, will finance three project proposals, one per pilot site, with amounts ranging from 20,000 € to 25,000 €

1. Eligibility criteria for the call for projects

The grantees will be Lebanese organisations that must fulfil the following requirements:

- A legal status recognised by the national authorities that enables them to receive grants from IUCN. The selected recipients will need to undergo a due diligence process. The requirements can be found [here](#).
- For the PINR and TCNR sites, proponents must have a formal role in the management of the protected areas, either as statutory site managers, having an agreement with the managing authority (e.g. co-management agreement), or providing an endorsement letter from the protected area management body.
- Previous experience in project and initiative implementation in Tyre Coast Nature Reserve, Palm Island Nature Reserve or Anfeh Salt Pans, including ecosystem and biodiversity threats, dynamics, touristic pressure, and socio-economic context.
- Experience in natural resource management, sustainable tourism initiatives, awareness and capacity-building activities.
- Strong relationship with tourism stakeholders at the local level to support the implementation of the activities.
- Capacity to operate in written and oral English for coordination and reporting purposes.
- Capacity to implement the project proposal between September 2024 and December 2025 (with some events to be extended until March 2026).
- IUCN member organisations will be positively evaluated.

1.1 Objectives of the project proposals

Eligible projects will involve implementing fieldwork at one of the Lebanon pilot sites as part of the Blue Tourism Initiative, in accordance with Activity 2.1.2 of the BTI project: *Lebanon, Tyre to Tripoli Coastal Route*. The overall goal of the grants is to increase the sustainability of blue tourism in each of the three sites.

All three sites have recognised natural and cultural values and play a key role in providing different tourism and visitor services, local livelihoods and cultural services for local population. Two of the sites (PCNR and TINR) are protected areas. The Anfeh salt pans are included in a potential future MPA in the region.

Interested organisations must submit a project proposal based on the template provided in Annex A, explaining how they would achieve the general objectives and associated activities detailed in this section.

The projects funded will be carried out over a maximum of 15 months, between September 2024 and December 2025 (on-the-ground activities must be finished by December 2025, but capitalisation events may take place until March 2026).

Goals and overall objectives

The pilot action aims to set the path for improved sustainability of the blue tourism sector in all sites in Lebanon, in a context of acute national economic and political crisis, and the global climate, biodiversity and pollution crisis – all of which are impacting the tourism sector.

The grant goals for the TCNR and PINR MPAs are:

1. **GOVERNANCE, PLANNING, AND SITE MANAGEMENT:** To improve the governance and management of the sites.

2. **VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS PRACTICES:** To protect the natural and cultural values of the pilot area, particularly during high season when many residents and tourists visit the sites - to achieve the appropriate management of visitor carrying capacity, flow, and behaviour.
3. **TOURISM OFFER DIVERSIFICATION AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES:** To promote the sites' natural and cultural values, fostering a sustainable tourism offer built in and around the MPA that generates positive impacts on the local community.

In Anfeh, building on the sustainable *salinas* model and the priority actions identified in the [MedArtSal operation plan](#), the three goals have been adjusted to align with the Salinas Sustainable Management Model in the Mediterranean as follows:

1. **GOVERNANCE:** To improve the governance and management of the site.
2. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:** To ensure the sustainability of current tourism activities in salinas, improving their impact on the conservation values of the MPA (pollution, biodiversity preservation, water/energy use, etc.).
3. **SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:** To promote socio-economic support to the salt artisans.

In all sites, pilot actions should additionally ensure to consider **two general objectives**:

- To actively involve the different stakeholders in the development and/or implementation of the project proposal activities, including the private sector and the protected area governance and management bodies (which could be a grantee as well).
- To ensure the sustainability of the implemented activities and achievement of expected impacts beyond the project life cycle; for this, each pilot action should strengthen or pursue new funding streams, including revenue generation mechanisms, to be able to support the local community (the training of local actors for fundraising in sustainable blue tourism is already considered in the BTI).

Specific objectives for each pilot site:

Pilot site	Specific objectives	Max. budget available
Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR)	<p>This pilot will support a project that strengthens the capacity of the TCNR to manage environmental pressure from seasonal visitors and improve tourism impacts on the local community, aligned with the following objectives:</p> <p>GOVERNANCE, PLANNING, AND SITE MANAGEMENT: To improve the governance and management of the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the consolidation of the TCNR management committee and team to ensure adequate human resources to manage visitors in the MPA. • Implement priority activities in the management plan carried out by the “spara,” strengthening the tourism (including ecotourism) and visitor management components, including, where needed, the study on carrying capacities/LAC of the site. • Explore revenue generation mechanisms from tourism for the MPA. <p>VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS PRACTICES: Propose actions to protect the natural and cultural values of the pilot area, particularly during high season when many residents and tourists visit the TCNR. This objective aims to achieve the appropriate management of visitor carrying-capacity, flow, and behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the visitor management system during the high season, aligned with the carrying capacity of the site. • Create light infrastructure and signage at key locations of the site. 	25,000 EUR

Pilot site	Specific objectives	Max. budget available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and build capacity among tourist operators (beach bars, land/sea tour operators and guides, accommodations, etc.) and local stakeholders to improve environmental practices (water use, waste management, biodiversity protection, etc.), supporting the effective management of MPAs and the development of sustainable blue tourism. <p>TOURISM OFFER DIVERSIFICATION AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES: To support the promotion of the natural and cultural values of the site, fostering a sustainable tourism offer built in and around the PINR that provides positive impacts to the local community (inc. SMEs) and ecosystems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the marketing and improve market access (B2B) for new/improved products, providing opportunities and integrating the local community. • Promote ecotourism of natural and cultural attractions, implemented by the local community, with tourism activities such as snorkelling (to discover underwater ruins), kayaking and turtle watching, visits to old souks and historical ruins, various religious sites, the Tyr racecourse, etc., including communication and awareness-raising materials (signs, videos, promotional material for social media, etc.). 	
Palm Island Nature Reserve (PINR)	<p>This pilot will support a project that strengthens the capacity of the PINR to manage environmental pressure from seasonal visitors and improve tourism impacts on the local community, aligned with the following objectives:</p> <p>GOVERNANCE, PLANNING, AND SITE MANAGEMENT: To improve the governance and management of the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the consolidation of the PINR management committee to ensure adequate human resources to manage visitors in the MPA. • Develop/update the management plan, strengthening the tourism (including ecotourism) and visitor management components. • Support the implementation of the plans, including, where needed, the study on carrying capacities/LAC of the site. • Explore MPA revenue generation mechanisms from tourism. <p>VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS PRACTICES: Propose actions to protect the natural values of the PINR, particularly during high season when many visitors and tourists visit the site. This objective aims to achieve the appropriate management of visitor numbers, flows, and behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the visitor management system during the high season, aligned with the carrying capacity of the site. • Create light infrastructure and signage on the island. • Raise awareness and build capacity among tourism operators (especially boat tours and marine operators) and key local actors for better environmental (water use, waste management, biodiversity protection, etc.) and safety practices and equipment (e.g., lifejackets). • Manage impacts and strengthen cooperation with the local community and visitors, including activities that support awareness to avoid disruption of the island ecosystem by visitors on the island and ferry boats, pollution and waste, and disturbance of nests (signs, videos, promotional materials for social media, etc.). 	20,000 EUR

Pilot site	Specific objectives	Max. budget available
	<p>TOURISM OFFER DIVERSIFICATION AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES: To support the promotion of the natural and cultural values of the site, fostering a sustainable tourism offer built in and around the PINR that provides positive impacts to the local community (inc. SMEs) and conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the marketing and improve market access (B2B) for new/improved products, providing opportunities and integrating the local community. • Promote ecotourism of natural and cultural attractions, implemented by the local community, with tourist activities such as visiting Tripoli; activities on the islands (ferry boats, restaurants, accommodation (boutique hotels), scuba diving, seaside activities, visiting the old rock-cut baths, the church, fragments of pottery, etc.); wildlife watching activities (observation of sea turtles, birds, marine mammals, etc.), including communication and awareness-raising materials (signs, videos, promotional material for social media, etc.). 	
<p>Anfeh Salt Pans</p>	<p>Building on the results of the MedArtSal Project and its Salina Sustainable Management Model in the Mediterranean and Handbook of Good Practices, this pilot action will support a project aligned with the following objectives:</p> <p>GOVERNANCE: To improve the governance and management of the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up mechanisms (e.g., cluster) for local governance to ensure the engagement of stakeholders in and around the site, from tourism (e.g., DMO) to conservation sectors, both public and private. • Support the declaration of a new MPA in the area, including the relationship with the existing HIMA. • Support the inclusion of the salinas in the management of the MPA and/or strengthen the sustainable tourism component of the existing management plan (if there is a management plan). • Consolidate cooperation between salina operators to facilitate participation in local, national, and international networks, including support for the MedArtSal Network. • Support the improvement of land use rights and legal status for salina operators, including the legal capacity to diversify their activities in blue tourism and regulations for salt production. • Campaign for the inclusion of the Anfeh salinas in the National Natural Heritage. <p>ENVIRONMENT: To ensure the sustainability of current tourism activities in Salinas and improve their impact on the MPA's conservation values (pollution, biodiversity preservation, water/energy use, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct awareness-raising activities for local stakeholders. • Develop awareness-raising materials on the importance of salt pans for local economies and tourism (signs, videos, promotional materials for social media, etc.). <p>SOCIO-ECONOMY: To promote socio-economic support to the salt artisans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revive abandoned salinas or develop existing ones. • Support the diversification of artisanal salinas through new or upgraded tourism products and visitor services, or integrating salina products (specialty salts, cosmetics, etc.) into the tourism value chain. • Improve the marketing of salina products, developing a commercial brand or a certification model for artisanal salt, and build marketing capacity to improve 	<p>20,000 EUR</p>

Pilot site	Specific objectives	Max. budget available
	<p>sales (small bags of salt, salt-based products, awareness of the historical importance of the salt pans, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Anfeh and its salt pans, sustainable tourism of natural attractions (the only salt pans in the country) and cultural attractions (cultural heritage of Anfeh and its culinary specialities, panoramic tours of the city landscape and olive groves), implemented by the local community, with tourist activities like water sports, gastronomy, religious tourism, accommodation, etc. 	

In addition to these pilot-specific objectives, the grant recipients will be required to:

- Participate in a **capacity-building workshop** focused on fundraising for sustainable blue tourism projects and programmes. Participants must then implement the abilities they learn and actively look for funding opportunities as part of the implementation of the project. The workshop will be provided by the BTI lead partners and supported by a field consultant.
- Support the organization, together with the IUCN-Med consultant, of a **meeting** in Lebanon **with key stakeholders** to gather feedback about the achievements of the pilot tests and identify, together with the stakeholders, the lessons learned and suggestions for replication and scaling up.

Please note: For the project implementation, capacity-building workshop and stakeholders meeting, consider the engagement of **relevant stakeholders in the country**, including, but not limited to, the DMOs¹ recently established in eight districts ('casas').

Activities

The proposals are not expected to address all the specific objectives listed in the table above or develop activities for each specific objective. However, the proposals should take into consideration the three grant goals specified at the beginning of this section for the MPAs and the Salinas when suggesting activities. The nature of the expected activities is in some cases named in the specific objective. Still, it can include a wide range of interventions to achieve the goals and objectives, including, but not limited to:

- Convening of actors and creation of networks/clusters, including meetings and workshops;
- Small capital investments in light infrastructure, signalling;
- Capacity building activities, including training, mentoring or expert support;
- Consultancies (legal, marketing, scientific studies), including the development/improvement of management plans or business plans for the sites (upgrading them or including a stronger tourism and visitor management component);
- Promotional and marketing activities, including awareness-raising activities and visual materials.

2. Project funding arrangements

IUCN Med and BTI will finance three proposals, one for each pilot site, for the amounts stated in section 1.1. IUCN-Med will provide all the funding, so there is no need for co-funding by the grantees. However, co-funding and complementarity with ongoing initiatives, programmes and/or projects will be highly valued.

3. Selection procedure

IUCN-Med is responsible for implementing the BTI programme in the Mediterranean and selecting the projects to be funded, following its internal procedures.

¹ Destination Management Organization (DMO)

3.1 Rejection Criteria

- Non-eligibility of the activities planned in relation to the programme objectives (see table in Chapter 1.1).
- Amount of grant requested in excess of the thresholds indicated in the table in Chapter 1.1 for each pilot site.
- Late or incomplete reception of the project proposal.
- Inability to provide legal documents and details during the due diligence process. Please verify your capacity to fill out the [following form](#).

3.2 Selection criteria

Criterion	Weighting
Availability to conduct the work on-site in the established timeline.	Yes / No
Technical, environmental and socio-economic feasibility of the project proposal; alignment with the objectives of the call.	35%
Experience in the management or activities implementation in the pilot site, implementing projects and initiatives on natural resources management, sustainable tourism initiatives, capacity-building, promotion and awareness-raising, local communities' outreach.	35%
Complementarity of the proposal with other initiatives.	15%
Sustainability of the project proposed and potential long-term impact of the activities beyond the project life cycle.	15%

4. Selection Procedure

The beneficiaries of the grant will be selected considering the criteria of section 3.2. The applicants must send a dossier containing:

- the project proposal, based on the template provided in Annex A
- the proposed logical framework for the project, following the template provided in Annex B.
- the proposed project budget, following the template provided in Annex C.

Interested candidates must email their proposal to Rosario Galán at rosario.galan@iucn.org with arnau.teixidor@iucn.org in CC no later than 23:59 CEST, 06 September 2024.

Please note:

- ✓ Only project proposals presented in the provided templates (Annex A, B and C) will be considered.
- ✓ Projects that are not eligible in relation to the budget proposed will not be examined.
- ✓ When sending the proposal by e-mail, please send files of less than 3MB, preferably in both PDF format, and .doc / .xls files.

5. Questions

Questions regarding this call for project can be emailed to Rosario Galán at rosario.galan@iucn.org, with arnau.teixidor@iucn.org in CC no later than 23:59 CEST, 06 August 2024.