



Protecting Blue Horizons

Introduction to the role play

Why this role play?

Human activities are the major cause for what has been recognized as a biodiversity crisis, namely the rapid and widespread loss of animal and plant species. The magnitude of this crisis is such that scientists now talk about a 6th Mass Extinction but, unlike previous extinction events, which were caused by natural phenomena, the current crisis is completely driven by anthropogenic causes. It is thus important to spread knowledge and raise awareness about the issues because we depend on biodiversity in ways that are not always apparent or appreciated. Biodiversity assures the functioning of ecosystems and their services to humans such as provision of clean water, plays a crucial role in human nutrition through its influence on world food production and provides reservoirs for the biological and the pharmacological sciences (WHO).

In this context, delegates from 196 governments sought to address this grave biodiversity crisis through international negotiations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted at the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the CBD in December 2022. This historic Framework, which supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, sets out an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. The 23 specific targets are regrouped under 4 global goals, namely

- **A** The integrity, connectivity and resilience of ecosystems is restored and enhanced by 2050 with a stop to on-going mass extinctions;
- **B** Biodiversity is sustainably used and managed and nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services;
- **C** The monetary and non-monetary benefits from the utilization of genetic resources, and digital sequence information on genetic resources, and of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, as applicable, are fairly and equitably shared;
- **D** Adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the GBF are secured and equitably accessible to all Parties, especially developing countries.

This path-breaking global agreement will generate **more benefits to more people if applied and implemented locally and regionally** by as many countries as possible thanks to public engagement and support.

Currently 17% and 10% of the world's terrestrial and marine areas respectively are under protection. A major target is to place 30% of the terrestrial and marine spaces under more protection by 2030. This is a challenge as many existing ones are 'paper parks'. To protect us all will **requires large efforts across social groups in all societies**.

In this introduction you will find the steps, the methodology and the approach we have used for the development of the role play. We hope you will engage in this global conversation and bring it down to the seas closest to you in search of solutions, independently of where you live right now, because a healthy ocean and its ecosystems are of utmost importance to all of us.

In a role play you **put yourself in the shoes of somebody else**. Each participant impersonates a different character involved, in this case in the effort to make a Marine Protected Area (MPA) work. The perspectives of the characters are likely to be different. The role play is a moment to confront different views and seek as much consensus as possible **without losing the goal out of sight**.

The deliberation will be introduced by a moderator. The moderator will welcome the participants, introduce the issue, possibly take some notes, keep track of the timing, and help with the debriefing process at the end of the conversation. Feedback to *Mundus maris* would be appreciated.

We researched different stakeholder profiles, but you can put in your own knowledge.

In order to create realistic profiles, we conducted a series of interviews with different stakeholders involved with MPAs to tap into their experience and understand their needs and concerns. These interviews helped us to create credible profiles for the role play. Along with the interviews, we did a literature research in order to complete the profiles and create additional ones. The role play can be enacted in different configurations.

We recommend five basic profiles, namely

- the artisanal fisher;
- the natural scientist;
- the MPA Director;
- the marine conservationist from an NGO;
- the representative of a public authority.

Additional profiles can be impersonated, depending on the location and the participants' interests. Examples of additional stakeholders may be a public official who manage the budget for local projects and has a say in licensing activities, a tourism manager, the head of a municipal sewage plant, an owner of a company interested in the building of an offshore wind farm, the captain of an industrial fishing company, a woman working in artisanal fishing/marketing/managing, and scientists from other fields.

Every participant is given a sheet containing the description of the character that he or she is going to impersonate. In the different profiles every character is introduced to a common scenario which locates and frames the starting issue. Then follows the description of the relative role, threats, interests and needs in order to understand how to position the stakeholder in the conversation.

Sitting in a circle, preferably with the map of a fictional area of concern in the middle, each participant will briefly introduce him/herself to the others in the guise of his/her chosen character, including how he/she positions him/herself in the debate concerning the MPA. Participants are then encouraged to respectfully work with all other stakeholders to generate collaborative solutions to meet the conservation objectives of the Marine Protected Area. Participants will have to remember that some sort of restriction is necessary to assure real protection. At the end of the time allotted to the deliberation, conclusions need to be drawn. If no consensus is possible, the conclusion may be to agree to disagree at this point, hoping to achieve a more satisfactory result in another round. It is important that participants convey as much as possible a sense of reality. Being 'too nice' or shallow will mean that we would end in the trap of the 'paper park'. For this reason, we strongly recommend that the deliberation will end with a solution proposal or at least a pathway to a solution.

After the deliberation, make sure that the necessary time is devoted to the debriefing. During the debriefing participants will digest the exchange and reflect on the dynamics that took place. Here is when the real learning process usually takes place. You can reflect together with other participants which issues and feelings emerged, what was easier or harder than expected and what could have been done differently.

Feedback, comments, and suggestions to *Mundus maris* will be highly appreciated. A chart is available so everyone can leave her/his name and e-mail to remain in contact and continue to exchange ideas as well as indicating consent to pictures being taken. The moderator may then share the documentation of the process with *Mundus maris* to support the learning process also for others.

Finally, those who are interested can obtain more information in the **supplementary material** from info@mundusmaris.org.