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Accelerating the Restoration of Seagrass Meadows in the Mediterranean area through Innovative ecosystem-service based Solutions
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Guide for stakeholder engagement and communication of the values of ecosystem services provided by seagrass restoration projects

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INTRODUCTION

Seagrass meadows are among the most valuable habitats in the Mediterranean: they store carbon, sustain fisheries, protect coastlines and support local economies. Yet they are disappearing, and the services they provide are rarely priced, so the case for protecting them is easily overlooked. This guide is a practical, step-by-step companion for project teams that want to change that - to estimate the value of selected ecosystem services provided by a meadow and to communicate that worth to the people and institutions who can act on it.

The guide explains the approach developed in the Interreg Euro-MED ARTEMIS project. ARTEMIS' four pilot sites tested elements in this guide, aimed at supporting the stakeholder identification and prioritization, engagement, ecosystem valorization and communication. It is organised as four sequential phases, each building on the last: identify and prioritise stakeholders (Phase 1); interview them to understand the local context (Phase 2); value the ecosystem services at stake (Phase 3); and communicate that value to mobilise support and finance (Phase 4).

The guide is deliberately concise. It explains what to do at each step and why, and points to the detailed ARTEMIS templates, questionnaires and reports, all made available to replicators alongside this document, where deeper methodological detail is needed. Each phase closes with a short "ARTEMIS in practice" box describing how the project completed that step and the challenges it met, so that replicators can learn from real experience rather than theory alone.

PHASE 1: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITISATION

Conserving and valuing *Posidonia oceanica* (*P. oceanica*)¹ is a multi-disciplinary effort. Restoration and the ecosystem services it delivers both affect, and are affected by, a wide range of actors. A systematic stakeholder mapping therefore ensures that the right voices are heard and that limited engagement effort is spent where it matters most. This phase is supported by the Stakeholder Mapping Template, which contains worked examples from the ARTEMIS pilots.

1.1 Stakeholder categorisation

Start by listing potential stakeholders and grouping them. A first useful distinction is between internal and external actors.

¹ *Cymodocea nodosa* has also been considered for this deliverable, but *P. oceanica* is the main focus.



Internal stakeholders are directly involved in the project's execution and decisions - for example project partners, designated MPA managers and direct funders.

External stakeholders sit outside the project structure but are directly or indirectly affected by its outcomes or proposed policies - for example local communities and private businesses.

When building the list, aim for representation across **four typologies**. Government and public authorities (from municipalities and port authorities to national ministries) hold the regulatory agency needed for policy change. Businesses and industry (diving centres, shipping and passenger lines, fisheries, tourism boards) depend on the services *P. oceanica* provides or cause direct pressure through activities such as anchoring or trawling. Civil society and NGOs (environmental organisations, community groups, local media) are vital for amplifying the project's message. Research and academia contribute the knowledge that underpins credible restoration and valuation.

1.2 Stakeholder mapping and evaluation

Once an initial list exists, score each stakeholder against a standard set of criteria rather than relying on intuition. The Stakeholder Mapping Template applies the criteria below and fills the stakeholder grid automatically. Scores can be revised at any time as the project learns more about each actor.

Table1:

	Criterion	Definition	Scoring
1.	Level of Interest	The degree to which the stakeholder is concerned with, affected by, or motivated to engage in the conservation and restoration of <i>P. oceanica</i> or the economic instruments (e.g., PES schemes) being considered.	• 0 (N/A) • 1 (Low) • 2 (Medium) • 3 (High)
2.	Level of Influence	The stakeholder's formal or informal ability to shape project decisions, policy development, regulatory processes, or stakeholder behaviour.	• 0 (N/A) • 1 (Low) • 2 (Medium) • 3 (High)
3.	Level of Impact	The stakeholder's ability to positively or negatively affect the implementation and outcomes of the project on the ground, regardless of their formal decision-making authority. (e.g., local communities delaying implementation through NIMBY - "Not In My Backyard" - opposition, or shipping companies refusing to comply with anchoring bans).	• 0 (N/A) • 1 (Low) • 2 (Medium) • 3 (High)



4	Level of Support	The extent to which the stakeholder is aligned with the project's objectives and willing to contribute to its success.	0 (N/A) 1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)
5	Decision Authority	Whether the stakeholder has formal decision-making authority over policies, permits, activities, or processes that may directly affect the project or its outcomes.	- Yes - No
6.	Expert	Whether the stakeholder possesses relevant technical, scientific, policy, regulatory, or operational expertise that can inform the design, implementation, or evaluation of the project.	- Yes - No
7.	Access to Resources	The ability of a stakeholder to contribute financial, technical, human, institutional, or other resources to the seagrass restoration project.	- Yes - No
8.	Overall Power	A composite metric derived from their influence, impact, decision-making authority, and access to resources.	0 (N/A) 1 (Low) 2 (Medium) 3 (High)

The stakeholder mapping template, depicted in figure 1 below, provides guidance for this evaluation. It allows for inputting the stakeholders relevant to the project, followed by the evaluation criteria, which can be populated with the scoring described in table 1.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1								
2		STAKEHOLDER DESCRIPTION			PROJECT RELATIONSHIP			
3	No	Name	Type	External/Internal*	Level of Interest	Level of Influence	Level of Impact*	Level of Support
4		Name			High = 3			
5		Category 1						
6		Example	MPA / Natura 2000 site managers	Internal	High = 3	High = 3	High = 3	High = 3
7								
8		Category 2						
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								

Figure 1: stakeholder mapping template

1.3 Prioritisation and the stakeholder grid



It is neither practical nor necessary to engage every stakeholder with the same intensity. Two further fields in the template turn the evaluation into an engagement plan. A “Key for...” field flags whether a stakeholder is crucial for a specific objective - the template distinguishes key for the pilot site, key for business outreach and key for amplification. An “Involvement” field then records how and when to engage them: keep informed, keep engaged, closely monitor, or collaborate and involve, and at which project phase.

To isolate the priority actors, plot the evaluated list on a stakeholder grid by influence and interest. The four quadrants suggest different strategies, as presented in figure 2 below:

The stakeholder grid: influence vs. interest



Plot each evaluated stakeholder by influence and interest; the quadrant sets the engagement strategy.

Figure 2 : Stakeholder grid

The goal of this phase is a **shortlist of 5 to 10 key stakeholders per pilot site** to carry forward into the interviews. With these prioritised, the project is ready for Phase 2.



ARTEMIS in practice: mapping the Crete pilot

In the Greek pilot (Atzikiari Bay, Crete) the team mapped more than 140 stakeholders and organised them into structured categories based on both governance level and thematic area. Public authorities were grouped according to their level of governance (national ministries, regional authorities, municipalities, and protected-area management bodies), while other stakeholders were clustered into civil society organisations, media, research and conservation actors, and private-sector entities with direct or indirect links to the marine environment, including fisheries, aquaculture, tourism businesses, diving centres, foundations, and ESG-active companies. This categorisation made it easier to assess stakeholders systematically and identify the key actors for inclusion in the stakeholder influence–interest matrix. A recurring challenge was that some of the most powerful actors were often the least engaged: several national ministries scored high on influence but low on interest, while overlapping mandates and unclear responsibilities across different levels of marine governance made it difficult to identify who ultimately held decision-making authority. Diving centres and local newspapers, by contrast, scored low on influence but high on support and became valuable amplifiers.

PHASE 2: SEMI-STRUCTURED STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

With the key stakeholders prioritised, the next step is to engage with them directly. Semi-structured interviews gather the primary information needed to understand how *P. oceanica* is currently governed, protected and restored, and how open stakeholders are to economic instruments. A complementary template; the Questionnaire for Stakeholders - Pilot Sites, is provided alongside this guide; this section explains how to use them.

2.1 Objectives of the interviews

The ultimate aim of the interviews is not only to assess the pilot site but to build robust policy recommendations. Specifically, the interviews assess baseline awareness of *P. oceanica* and its ecosystem services among decision-makers; map how protection and restoration are currently managed, funded and legally supported; identify the gaps and barriers in policy, funding or local compliance that hinder conservation; and test familiarity with, and willingness to participate in, market-based mechanisms (e.g. nature credits, carbon credits, etc.).

2.2 Who to invite



Do not try to interview everyone on the mapping list. Aim for 5 to 10 key stakeholders per pilot site, which is enough to reach data saturation without exhausting resources, and select them from the “high influence” quadrants of the grid. The sample must be diverse: a good cross-section includes a national or public authority (e.g. a ministry or coast guard), a local or regional manager (e.g. an MPA or Natura 2000 site manager), a representative of the local blue economy (e.g. maritime transport, a diving business or a tourism board), and a civil-society or NGO voice.

2.3 Methodological design and best practices

A semi-structured interview is a guided dialogue - neither a rigid survey nor a casual chat - that explores a topic in depth while keeping enough consistency to compare findings across sites.

Prepare, but don't over-prime. Send a brief primer on the project's goals beforehand, but not the full questionnaire, so that responses remain honest and unscripted.

Stay neutral. Be transparent about the project mandate, but neutral in facilitation. Clearly explain the project's objective, then avoid steering stakeholders towards a preferred answer. If a stakeholder lacks knowledge on a topic, use the prompts built into the questionnaire to explain briefly before moving on.

Probe for the “why”. The real value lies in the follow-up. Behind every yes/no or scaled answer, ask why the stakeholder feels that way, especially on regulatory barriers and PES.

Document carefully. With permission, record the interview for accurate transcription; if recording is declined, bring a dedicated note-taker so the interviewer can keep eye contact and conversational flow.

2.4 Adapting the questionnaire to local contexts

Each pilot site faces different pressures, so the questionnaire is designed to be adapted. However, its three core axes must remain intact, because they are what allow findings to be compared across the Mediterranean for EU-level policy recommendations. The three axes are knowledge of *P. oceanica* (awareness of locations, human impacts such as anchoring or trawling, and perceived meadow health); the conservation and restoration framework (current legal and governance approaches, and awareness of active versus passive restoration); and Payment for Ecosystem Services (understanding of market-based instruments and willingness to contribute financially).

Within those axes, tailor the wording to the interviewee. With a diving operator, focus on local, cultural and recreational services and on anchoring or diver impact.



With a ministry official, frame meadow locations as national spatial mapping, and PES as regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity for carbon crediting. Adapt to the site, too: if a meadow was degraded by a known event such as a port expansion, add questions about how that was handled; if the region already uses a tourism eco-tax, ask whether it could be an effective mechanism for *P. oceanica* restoration. The qualitative data gathered here feeds directly into both the valuation (Phase 3) and the communication (Phase 4) that follow.

ARTEMIS in practice: what the Menorca interviews revealed

Menorca already sits inside a comparatively mature protection framework; a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Balearic rules that regulate anchoring over Posidonia, and established local monitoring. Stakeholders were noticeably more aware of the meadows' value and of the main pressure on them: intense summer nautical tourism and anchoring by recreational and charter boats. Here the gap was less about the absence of rules and more about enforcement capacity, seasonal pressure peaks, and coordination between island, regional and port-level competences.

The obstacles raised were therefore less about awareness and more about delivery: the plant's very slow growth and the scarcity of proven restoration successes, high and uncertain costs, and above all the overlapping administrative competences (local, regional, state) and permitting bureaucracy, on top of that, there is a mismatch between political cycles and ecological recovery timescales. On financing, about half had heard of Payments for Ecosystem Services (mostly terrestrial examples; marine PES was seen as virtually absent and unregulated in Spain), and most supported applying PES to *Posidonia*, but the single most common stance was conditional: "yes, with doubts about how it would actually be applied." Respondents overwhelmingly favoured a public-private funding mix, voiced a strong "polluter-pays" logic (those profiting from the marine environment should contribute), pointed to earmarked taxes and blended finance, and warned against greenwashing. A recurring caveat ran through the answers: restoration should not become an offset that licenses fresh damage; existing meadows must be protected first.

PHASE 3: ECOSYSTEM SERVICE VALUATION

To communicate the selected ecosystem-service benefits related to restoration convincingly, ARTEMIS decided to translate those benefits into common, monetary values. This phase combined the qualitative findings from Phase 2 with insights from the project's experts to decide which services matter locally. Afterwards, the standardisation of all biophysical and economic information and the subsequent quantification of ecosystem services, relied on a natural capital accounting



approach, based on the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting - Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA). The full method, applied to all pilot sites, is set out in the Ecosystem Service Value Report; this section provides an overview of all steps to be followed.

3.1 Identifying the ecosystem services to value

A central lesson from ARTEMIS is to be selective. The project began with eight candidate services (carbon sequestration, biodiversity preservation, tourism, erosion protection, fishing, sand provision, nutrient recycling, and legacy and existence) but narrowed these to two for practical reasons. For example, fishing is not permitted in most pilot meadows, coastal protection is hard to quantify in the project's timeframe, and no PES initiatives yet exist for legacy and existence. The work ultimately focused on the two most robustly measurable services, global climate regulation and biodiversity preservation, which may support the development of credible carbon- and nature-related financing mechanisms. Other projects should expect to make similar pragmatic choices to safeguard its feasibility.

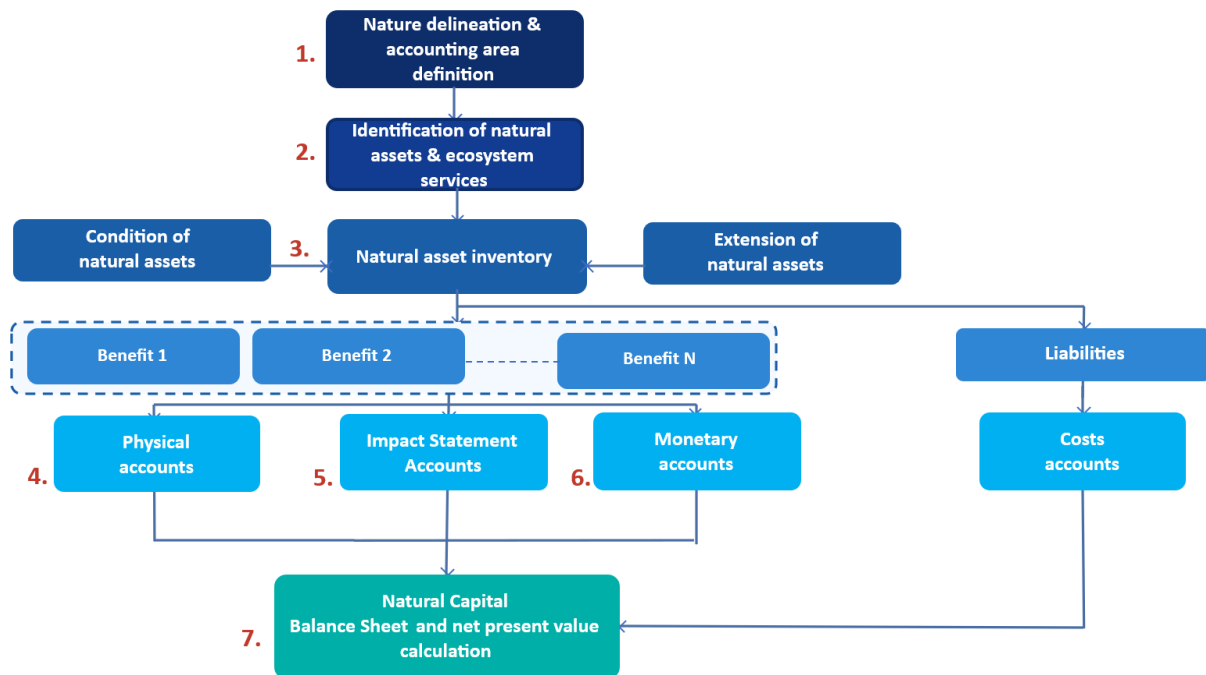
3.2 The SEEA EA methodological approach

SEEA EA is an integrated statistical framework that standardises the measurement of habitats and links them to economic activity. The accounting process follows six steps.

Steps 1 and 2: identify and inventory the natural assets. Delineate the site and map the habitat extent using cartographic studies and GIS, distinguishing living meadow from dead matte. The condition then is assessed through specific ecosystem- and ecological-based indices, such as EBQI, WePOSI, and MediSkew. Generally speaking these indices score the condition of an ecosystem on a scale (e.g. 1 - 10).

Step 3: physical accounts. Measure the annual flow of benefits using the most robust indicators. Biodiversity preservation is measured by the spatial extent of the site (in square metres). The ecosystem service of global climate regulation is measured in tonnes of CO₂ sequestered, combining the annual accumulation rate in the sediment with the existing carbon stock held in living biomass, litter and sediment (in seagrass, the sediment dominates).

Step 4: monetary accounts. Apply the valuation method best suited to each service. Biodiversity is valued by the defensive (maintenance) costs needed to keep the habitat in good ecological status - active transplantation, administrative and management payroll, scientific monitoring, and upkeep of infrastructure such as eco-moorings. Blue carbon is valued at market prices, using a range: a lower value from the EU Emissions Trading System (around EUR 70 per tonne in 2025) and an upper value from the Social Cost of Carbon (around EUR 168 per tonne), which estimates the economic damage caused by each tonne emitted.



3.3 Developing the natural capital balance sheet

Step 5 brings the accounts together in a **Natural Capital Balance Sheet**, which projects the Net Present Value (NPV) of the ecosystem services into the future and so expresses the meadow as a tangible asset that can be communicated to funders. Future annual flows are projected over a standard horizon - typically 35 and 60 years, reflecting the maximum useful life of an intervention - and discounted to present value using a decreasing real discount rate of 3.5 % for years 1 to 30 and 3 % for years 31 to 60, to account for long-term uncertainty. **Step 6** then keeps the balance sheet alive: as **monitoring** records future changes in the asset's value, the sheet provides the transparency that PES schemes depend on.

3.4 Setting the stage for communication

The balance sheet yields a specific value per square metre for the targeted meadow, but a number is only useful if it is accurate and reaches the right stakeholders. Moreover, it is crucial to recognize the values obtained, their strengths and limitations (especially if not all value of ecosystem services can be captured) to support decision-making processes and support conservation efforts effectively. In Phase 4, this quantitative evidence is merged with the stakeholder grid from Phase 1: by identifying the key amplifiers and drawing on the barrier analysis from the interviews, the project can translate the SESA EA metrics into compelling, tailored narratives for policymakers, businesses and the wider coastal community.



ARTEMIS in practice - four pilots, four values

Applying SEEA EA across the four pilots produced very different asset values per square metre, driven mainly by local costs and carbon stocks. Over a 35-year horizon at market carbon prices, the total natural capital balance sheet of Menorca came to approximately EUR 642/m², Crete about EUR 255/m², Monfalcone EUR 3620/m² and Sardinia at EUR 9020/m²; using the higher Social Cost of Carbon and a 60-year horizon raised these further (Sardinia reached roughly EUR 11,370/m²). The wide spread reflects real differences - Sardinia's exceptionally high carbon stock and transplantation costs, Crete's small living meadow.

The main challenges were data availability and comparability: condition had to be measured with two different indices (EBQI for *P. oceanica*, MediSkew for the *Cymodocea nodosa* meadow in Monfalcone), and biodiversity could only be valued conservatively, through maintenance costs, rather than as a full welfare measure. Being explicit about these limits is part of communicating the figures honestly.

PHASE 4: COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The first three phases produce the project's evidence base: who matters, what they think, and what the ecosystem is worth. Phase 4 puts that evidence to work, converting the Natural Capital Balance Sheet and the stakeholder grid into targeted communication and a structured engagement journey that moves priority stakeholders from awareness to commitment. In ARTEMIS this journey is designed to end in a concrete, market-based outcome: participation in the Seagrass Credit. Two companion materials support this phase: the Guidelines for Engaging Stakeholders and the Corporate Roadmap for Seagrass Restoration, alongside the pitching materials.

4.1 From valuation to narrative

Before approaching anyone, decide which evidence to lead with, and for whom, by merging the outputs of the previous phases.

Select the audience. Return to the stakeholder grid. The high-influence, high-interest key players are the candidates for investment and partnership, while the low-influence, high-interest amplifiers (e.g. diving schools, citizen-science groups, local media) carry the message into the community.

Match the metric to the motivation. Use the Phase 2 barrier analysis to choose the framing: lead with the defensive-costs value where stakeholders resist carbon markets, and with the blue-carbon value and Social Cost of Carbon where they are



interested in credits. The per-square-metre figure from the balance sheet gives every message a defensible number.

Value protection versus value creation. Some audiences engage to protect value, against physical nature risk (a diving operator who depends on healthy meadows) or reputational risk (a hotel exposed to scrutiny over its coastal footprint). Others engage to create value; brand differentiation, access to green finance, or nature as a growth theme. The same meadow can be sold as insurance against loss or as a platform for growth, depending on who is listening.

Hold a consistent spine. Across audiences the underlying story is the same: why P. oceanica matters, and why the market fails to protect it today. Its services are underpriced or unpriced, creating a persistent investment gap, while frameworks such as TNFD, CSRD and the EU Taxonomy are increasing corporate attention to nature-related risks, impacts, dependencies and opportunities. In this context, the Seagrass Credit is positioned as a potential tool to channel finance towards measurable seagrass restoration outcomes and to generate decision-useful information for nature-related strategies, risk management and disclosures, where relevant.

4.2 Tailoring the message to the audience

A single script does not work across stakeholder types; the message must be built around what each audience expects to gain. Two broad audiences need distinct approaches.

Business and market participants

Businesses respond best to four levers; risk reduction (coastal protection and resilience, and the cost savings they bring), brand value, regulatory & disclosure alignment (CSRD, the EU Taxonomy, TNFD), and revenue opportunities (diving, eco-tourism and blue carbon markets). Different participants connect through different motivations: corporates to managing reputational risk, investors to the EU Taxonomy and offsetting, credit institutions and insurers to compensating impacts, consultants to informing strategy, and SMEs to corporate responsibility and public biodiversity targets such as the Global Biodiversity Framework. The benefits worth naming are economic (avoided infrastructure and maintenance costs, better water quality for tourism, sustainable fisheries, possibly lower insurance costs), regulatory and strategic (stronger ESG performance), and reputational and social (leadership in biodiversity action, eco-conscious customers, stronger community relations). Their relevance varies by sector - fisheries depend on habitat quality, tourism and real estate on water clarity and beach stability, ports and energy on resilient coastlines, and consumer brands on supply-chain and reputational exposure.

Public-sector stakeholders



Public authorities respond to a different narrative, built around climate adaptation and coastal resilience, local economic stability (tourism and fisheries), and alignment with EU and national policy such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy and national climate adaptation plans. Link restoration explicitly to local priorities - managing coastal risk, reducing future municipal costs, supporting EU reporting compliance - and be clear about what is expected of the authority: permitting and policy support, habitat management, awareness-raising, and the option of a public-private partnership. The benefits for them are environmental and climate (reduced erosion, better water quality, biodiversity recovery in MPAs and Natura 2000 sites), socio-economic (higher-value tourism, sustainable fisheries, jobs and citizen science), and policy and governance (support for commitments under the MSFD and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030).

4.3 The engagement journey

ARTEMIS uses a four-step journey, applied with the audience-specific narratives above.

Step 1: Initial contact: a short, stakeholder-tailored email that opens the relationship.

Step 2: Awareness / exploratory meeting: an introduction to *P. oceanica*'s services, the threats it faces and the benefits of engaging, supported by pitching material and pilot-specific data.

Step 3: Co-design working session: a deeper session, typically a workshop of around two hours, exploring how the stakeholder's priorities align with the restoration strategy and what financing this unlocks.

Step 4: Partnership proposal: a presentation of investment options, the Seagrass Credit, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to prepare for a continued collaboration.

The exploratory meeting is an important first point of contact. Open by introducing yourself and your project and explain why seagrass matters for that particular stakeholder; share pilot-specific data drawn from the valuation; set out a clear investment pathway with measurable outcomes the stakeholder can report and a role in monitoring; present the benefits and the visibility your project offers; allow time for a guided question-and-answer exchange; and close by gauging interest and proposing the next session with a deadline.

4.4 The Seagrass Credit as the engagement vehicle

The communication effort ultimately offers stakeholders something concrete to invest in, which gives the journey a tangible “ask” and the valuation a route to market. A detailed description of the Seagrass Credit methodology developed by ARTEMIS can be found in the ARTEMIS Cookbook, attached to this document.



What the credit is. A bundled, verified unit linking biodiversity, blue carbon and additional ecosystem service outcomes to a defined area of *P. oceanica* restoration or management over a defined period. The number of credits reflects the restored area and its ecological condition (Extent × Condition); the price reflects the ecosystem-service value from Phase 3, the project's capital and operating costs and an industrial benefit, with restoration costs subtracted to give a market-driven price.

Why it is credible. The credit rests on the integrity features buyers and regulators expect: additionality, a robust MRV (Monitoring, Reporting and Verification) system combining field monitoring, remote sensing and natural-capital accounting, permanence buffers, leakage controls, Do-No-Significant-Harm safeguards, and a transparent registry with serial numbers and an audit trail. These features could allow the credit to provide decision-useful data to inform nature-related strategies, risk management and disclosures, where relevant, as supporting evidence for disclosures prepared under CSRD/ESRS or in line with the TNFD recommendations.

How stakeholders enter. The relationship typically moves from initial interest, to an MoU to co-design and pilot the credit (a three-to-six-month period of working groups and MRV pilots), to an offtake or forward agreement with milestone-based issuance, and on to a strategic partnership. Ex-post performance credits offer higher certainty at a higher price; forward or offtake agreements offer a discount in return for early, de-risked commitment.

4.5 Anticipating questions, building trust and sustaining communication

Credibility is won or lost in the detail, so prepare for the questions stakeholders consistently raise: what is the return on investment; do I get a certificate or proof of restoration; do I get a nature or blue-carbon credit; can we claim to be “nature positive”; what is the funding goal; are there comparable operational seagrass credits; who has invested already; how does this Credit scheme differ from others; and what happens if restoration fails. To build trust, respond to those questions with honest, transparent answers, instead of overly polished marketing statements. In particular, participation in or purchase of a Seagrass Credit may support evidence-based communication on contributions to seagrass restoration, biodiversity recovery and blue-carbon-related action, provided that any external claims are specific, transparent, proportionate to verified outcomes and aligned with recognised science-based and/or regulatory frameworks.

Use the meeting to listen as well as to present. Focus the discussion around four key questions;

1. What would motivate them to invest (sustainability targets, biodiversity commitments, risk reduction)



2. What kind of value they want (strategic, reputational, operational or compliance-related)
3. What assurances they would need (e.g. scientific evidence, verified impact, credible monitoring and reporting, certification)
4. What would deter them (regulatory uncertainty, unclear returns, lack of credible standards)

Throughout, follow a few principles: be specific rather than vague, be realistic about the funding required, show local context and qualified staff, be honest about risks and past failures, and prioritise credible financial returns rather than using environmental benefits to excuse below-market performance. Avoid “greenhushing”, which is under-communicating genuine achievements for fear of scrutiny. Finally, sustain engagement beyond the first meeting through the channels stakeholders prefer, such as workshops, webinars, newsletters and social media, supported by pitching material, media events at pilot sites and EU-level visibility.

ARTEMIS in practice: a market consultation for a credit that does not yet exist

In February 2026 ARTEMIS took the valuation to market through a consultation deck, Building the Seagrass Credit Market for the Mediterranean, framing a bundled credit for biodiversity, blue carbon and coastal resilience, a clear cost-to-price logic, an MRV and governance model, and a partnership ladder from interest, to MoU, to offtake, to strategic partner. Prospective participants were invited, via a short questionnaire, to say what would motivate them, what value and assurances they wanted, and what would deter them.

The hardest questions were the ones the project had anticipated: with no comparable operational seagrass credit yet in the market, stakeholders asked “who has invested already, and why would I be first?”, pressed on what happens if restoration fails, and probed whether they could legitimately make a “nature positive” claim. Being candid about the credit being under development - rather than overselling it - proved more persuasive than glossing over the gaps.

CONCLUSION

Together, the four phases form a single, repeatable methodology that carries a pilot site from a blank map to a working market relationship. Stakeholder mapping identifies who matters; semi-structured interviews reveal what they know and what stands in the way; ecosystem-service valuation estimates the economic value of selected ecosystem services associated with restoration; and communication and engagement convert that evidence into commitment. Applied consistently across the Mediterranean, the approach is intended not only to protect individual meadows but also to provide a practical framework that can be adapted and



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replicated across different contexts. By bringing together scientific evidence, stakeholder engagement and economic valuation, it helps bridge the gap between conservation, policy and investment, creating the conditions for long-term, credible seagrass restoration.

A key lesson from the pilots is that credibility depends on communicating assumptions, limitations and verified outcomes transparently, while ensuring that restoration finance complements - and never substitutes - the protection of existing seagrass meadows.





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