

Call for Research Proposals: Marine Reserves/MPAs in the Israeli Mediterranean Waters

Background

The state of the oceans is a rising global concern. Research has demonstrated that Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are often the most effective means to protect and restore marine ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity. International assessments of key biological variables consistently show that well managed MPAs have a positive impact on marine ecosystems and extended beneficial effects (both economic and ecological), even beyond the designated areas. Many countries have thus adopted marine conservation strategies that put MPAs front and centre.

Currently, declared marine reserves – the only recognized subset of MPAs in Israel thus far – occupy only 0.25% of the Israeli Mediterranean territorial water. These include six small reserves adjacent to the coastline. The Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) aims to establish a network of large marine reserves in at least 20% of the Israeli Mediterranean . A detailed strategic plan for these marine reserves in the territorial water is already being assessed by the planning authorities. However, scientific gaps still remain in our understanding of MPA function, influence and effective management. The INPA together with Yad Hanadiv are interested in cooperating with the scientific community to fill these gaps. This will be achieved through support of applicable research, focused on questions that underpin the establishment and management of effective MPAs.

Goals

We seek to create a solid scientific foundation for the establishment and management of Israeli marine reserves (MPAs), their effectiveness and their role in the rehabilitation of ecosystems and biodiversity. We will fund research projects on all aspects of Marine Reserve (MPAs) in the Israeli Mediterranean Sea. The emphasis will be on local, applicative, high quality and forward-looking research that fills major current knowledge gaps, having a direct and clear impact. Cross-disciplinary proposals are welcome.

Grant Structure and Duration

The grant duration will be up to 3 years. Large interdisciplinary proposals may be granted up to NIS 500,000 per year. Smaller proposals may be granted up to NIS 200,000 per year. The review committee reserves the right to determine the number of proposals granted from each category, to request changes (to exclude or add components) or not to accept any proposals.

Review Process

An international scientific steering committee will be appointed by Yad Hanadiv in partnership with the INPA. Its task will be to prioritize and oversee the review processes, monitor the progress of the selected proposals and guide the implementation of the results within local marine reserves.

The review process will consist of two stages: a) **pre-proposals**, containing concise 2-page descriptions of the research (the objective of this call, see guidelines below). These will be evaluated by the scientific steering committee; b) detailed **full proposals** will be prepared for selected pre-proposals. The scientific steering committee reserves the right to invite applications of full research proposals (even when a pre-proposal has not been submitted). Evaluation of the full research proposal will be carried out, *inter alia*, by international experts invited by the scientific steering committee.

This call for pre-proposals, combined with further assessment, will serve the review committee in identifying and assembling knowledge gaps on MPAs that may be made public. The applicants must agree to publicly sharing their proposals and waive any claims to confidentiality of the information contained therein.

Pre-proposals will be assessed based on:

1. Applicability to the advancement of the scientific underpinning of local marine reserves/Marine Protected Areas. Concrete goals for delivery must be provided. **This will be the single most important criterion for pre-proposal evaluation.**
2. Project feasibility
3. Scientific output relative to the budget
4. Originality

Guidelines for Pre-Proposals

Proposals must be written in English and contain a cover page, a two-page description of the proposed research and a supplementary page (see details below).

Cover page:

- Title
- Author names with affiliations
- Contact details

Two-page description of the proposed research:

- Brief background
- The knowledge gaps to be addressed
- Applicability of the project to Israeli Mediterranean MPAs
- Brief methodology
- Description of the research team and their ability to execute the proposed research

Supplementary page (one page only):

- **Estimated budget containing main budget item (matching options should be indicated)**
- Reference list: not to exceed 10 references
- Figures (only if essential to the understanding of the proposal)

Proposals should be written in a 11-12 pt font; 1.5-line spacing; normal margins (2.54cm). Footnotes should be avoided.

Timetable

Pre-proposals submission deadline: 18 February 2018, 08:00 Israel time

The committee reserves the right to change the deadline and will personally notify applicants of these changes.

Other Conditions

Principle investigator of the funded proposals will be required to present the progress, findings and results of the research to the scientific steering committee at the end of each year in a joint meeting. An elaborated final report must be submitted at the end of the grant term.

The committee has the authority to determine whether research progress is satisfactory, to request a new workplan and timetable or to choose not to renew the funding between years.

Contact for Submission

Proposals should be sent by e-mail to the following address: **science4mpa@isees.org.il**

The proposal should be attached as a single PDF file.