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Call for Abstracts

Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process –
Networking Event

**Disentangling the complexity and variability of
Mediterranean temporary ponds (habitat type
*3170)**

9-11 March 2022, Botanical Garden of Rome, Italy

Invitation to Submit

Dear colleague,

we are delighted to invite you to submit an abstract for oral presentations and posters.

A list of main topics with short summaries of their content is given. The Organising Committee and the chairs for each session will review the abstracts and prepare the programme for oral and poster presentations.

Only the text of the abstract will be reviewed; author names and affiliations will not be considered during the revision process.

All posters will be available to view as pdfs via the websites linked with the event, and hard copies will be displayed continuously for 2 days at the event rooms.

Oral presentations will take place in person only. Each oral presentation will be 15 minutes, including time for questions, with more time allocated to selected interactive sessions.

The final programme will be designed to accommodate the accepted oral and poster presentations, reflecting the level of demand from participants.

Key dates

Submission deadline: **15 February 2022**

If you have any queries following this document, please email at coordinator@lifeprimed.eu

The registration form and a provisional programme of the event can be found [here](#).



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Networking Event Overview

Transitional small wetlands and coastal forests are among the most degraded and threatened ecosystems in the European Union. This has resulted in many habitats and species in Mediterranean coastal areas having 'unfavorable', 'vulnerable' or 'near threatened' conservation status. Actions to improve habitats' conservation status are particularly needed in freshwater environments such as the 'Mediterranean temporary ponds'.

This habitat type of priority interest (code 3170*) is usually formed by heterogeneous, shallow (a few centimetres deep), and small water bodies, which dries entirely in summer. The length of the flooding period has a strong influence on the floristic composition, mainly belonging to the plant *community Isoeto-Nanojuncetea*.

Due to such environmental variability and transitoriness, the interpretation of temporary ponds regularly challenge European botanists and ecologists. This hampers the definition of appropriate restoration, conservation and management measures to address the pressures and threats associated with habitat 3170* such as climate change, shrub expansion, eutrophication, invasive alien species, and inappropriate water and forest management.

The event aims at gathering Natura 2000 practitioners to exchange good practices, forefront methods, lessons learned and results to harmonise identification procedures and brainstorm more appropriate restoration, conservation and management measures for enabling the long-term conservation of EU Mediterranean temporary ponds.



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Wednesday – March 9

Session 1

SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN TEMPORARY PONDS (MTPs)

Combining nature conservation and management goals needs more coherent classification and harmonised identification tools to achieve the targets of the **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030** and full implementation of the Habitats Directive. This point has been regularly outlined during the whole **Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process for the Mediterranean Biogeographical region** (Thessaloniki, 2014, Limassol, 2017, Madrid 2018-2020, Sila National Park 2021). This session aims at stepping up the established Road Map for the standing freshwater habitats of the Mediterranean biogeographical region, specifically targeting the habitat type *3170. By sharing recent progress, keynote speakers from the policy side introduce gaps and delays in conservation to stimulate the participants to start discussing more appropriate practices on identifying, restoring and managing such fragile ecosystems.

Session 2

FACING MTPs' COMPLEXITY AND VARIABILITY

Environmental mosaics often characterise Mediterranean habitats. This high variability is intensified across countries making the interpretation of EU habitats ambiguous and challenging to harmonise at the continental scale. Habitat definition criteria are not always fixed or require high proficiency on plant ecology that Natura 2000 practitioners often lack. Thus, **habitat identification** is often a challenging exercise. This affects proper identification, monitoring and comparison of conservation trends with natural ranges/reference conditions. The need for further clarification led to tailored revision (e.g. Watson et al., 2021) or national-based guidelines for freshwater habitats. However, not all the approaches can be regularly scaled-down or applied across different geographical contexts. In this session, European vegetation ecologists present **traditional and modern methodologies to identify Mediterranean temporary ponds** (e.g. vegetation clustering analysis, virtual time machines) and open up an interactive discussion on the opportunity of co-developing a habitat identification tool (e.g. hierarchical dichotomous key) to facilitate non-botanists to interpret the 'Mediterranean temporary ponds'.



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Thursday – March 10

Session 3

CONNECTING POLICY, SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

Mediterranean temporary ponds is a habitat type extremely rich in diversity but particularly vulnerable to a wide range of both direct and indirect human impacts. It is tremendously susceptible to climate change, water pollution, overgrazing, shrub invasion, and prone to natural eutrophication and disappearance due to the abandonment of traditional land use. Its ecological and geomorphological variability complicates designing tailor-made and need-oriented **conservation and management solutions**, exposing conservation initiatives to failure. In this session, Natura 2000 practitioners and Project Managers from over Europe (LIFE and non-LIFE projects) exchange cases of habitat misinterpretation and mitigation measures adopted to achieve project conservation objectives. Panellists and the audience network with each other strengthening their relationships and having thought-provoking conversations and debates. The final group discussion resumes all the event contributions and prepares an overview of restoration and management measures for habitat 3170*.



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