



REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING OF MONASTIR

2022

Introduction

The association «Notre Grand Bleu» is an environmental scientific association whose objective is to protect, manage, raise awareness and discover the natural environment of the bay of Monastir and the Kuriat islands. Indeed, the creation of the International Environmental Training Center of Monastir -the first pilot model in Tunisia and North Africa- is a way to ensure environmental education and awareness missions for the protection of local natural resources. In addition, this eco-energy center will participate in the economic sustainability of the association «Notre Grand Bleu» while promoting a broader socio-economic development at the scale of Monastir since it offers real prospects for the environment, employment and socio-economic development for the region.

The association “Notre Grand Bleu”, the project owner, succeeded in obtaining subsidies for the financing of this project which were ensured by the following backers:

- ❖ The association Horizons for a Green Development through its project MINARET
- ❖ The MAVA foundation
- ❖ The municipality of Monastir
- ❖ Association of twinning of German-Tunisian cities, Munster-Monastir
- ❖ The SOPAL Company for supplies

The finalization of the construction of the International Center for Ecological Training in Monastir has resulted in the establishment of an ecological incubator that addresses associations, the private sector and organizations that develop an innovative product or service related to the protection of ecological systems. The incubator proposes to accompany the projects of students/trainees/others and to organize events to raise public awareness of the challenges of the ecological transition. The first opening of the center was in July 06, 2022 to welcome the donors who made a visit to the center and the Kuriat Islands, the site of intervention of the association.



After a dream long waited for years, the International Center of Ecological Training of Monastir was opened to the public for the first time in July 19, 2022 in the presence of the Governor and Mayor of Monastir, Mr. Hedi Chebil, General Director of the Environment and Quality of Life at the Ministry of Environment and several regional executives who attended to participate in the inauguration of the center. In addition, the name of the center was changed to **The Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir Monastir.**

Since then, the center has become functional to meet the objective of its implementation.

I. **The activities carried out within the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir:**

Since the 19th of July 2022, the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir has started to play the role of an incubator to carry out quite diversified activities that vary between training sessions, exchange visits and particular visits.

1. **Training sessions:**

➤ **Internal training Sessions:**

- **Training on report writing:**

The NGB association has organized on July 20, 2022 a training workshop on scientific report writing, which aims to develop the capacities of its section NGB Juniors, through which more than 25 young men and women were trained in this field.



- **Training on invasive species:**

The NGB association has organized on July 21, 2022 a training workshop on ecosystem interactions, which aims to develop the capacities of its section NGB Juniors, through which more than 25 young men and women were trained in this field.



- **Training on sea turtle:**

The association “Notre Grand Bleu” has organized on July 21, 2022 a training workshop on the marine turtle led by Mr. Almokhtar Said, which aims to develop the capabilities of its section NGB Juniors, through which more than 25 young men and women were trained in the field of marine turtle conservation.



- **Photography training:**

In order to strengthen the capacities of the youth of the Association «Notre Grand Bleu Junior», a workshop on photography was organized on July 27, 2022 through which more than 20 young men and women were trained in this field. This workshop was provided by Mr. Omar Obada Harzallah.



- **Training on Posidonia:**

In order to develop their capacities, the members of the Association «Notre Grand Bleu Junior» have organized a workshop on the Posidonia meadows through which more than 30 young men and women have been trained in this field. All this thanks to Mr. Yassine Ramzi Sghaier and all the supervisors of the Association «Notre Grand Bleu».



- **Training on Geo-Sciences:**

A workshop on geosciences was organized on July 21, 2022, which aims to develop the capacities of its Junior section, and through which more than 20 young men and women were trained in this field.



- **Training on ecosystem interactions:**

The NGB association has organized on July 26, 2022 a training workshop on ecosystem interactions, which aims to develop the capacities of its section NGB Juniors, through which more than 25 young men and women were trained in this field.



- **Training on innovative solutions for the fight against climate change at the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training:**

In order to strengthen the capacities of the NGB association, a training workshop was organized on September 16, 2022 on innovative solutions to cope with climate change, this session was conducted by Mr. Marwan Temimi, a Ph.D. student from the University of Quebec, Associate Professor at the Department of Civil, Environmental and Oceanic Engineering of the American University, and Past Manager of the Laboratory of Detection, Coastal and Environmental Modeling at the Emirates University.



- **External training Sessions:**
- **Training Posidonia MIAREM:**

In accordance with the program of cross-border cooperation Italy Tunisia 2014-2022 and within the framework of the strategic project "Innovative methodologies and strengthening measures for the protection of the Mediterranean environment", the Association «Notre Grand Bleu» hosted a team of the MIAREM project on August 22, 2022 at the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir to conduct an applied training session on the ecological restoration of degraded parts of the seabed, through activities of cultivation of posidonia meadows.

The project is implemented by the Regional Agency for the Protection of the Environment of Sicily (ARPA Sicily) and six partners, including three Tunisians: Faculty of Sciences of Tunis (FST), Higher Institute of Biotechnology of Sidi Thabet (ISBST), Higher School of Engineers of Medjaz El Bab (ESIM) and three Italian: University of Catania (UNI CT), Mediterraneo Consulting srl (MED CONS) and FLAG Golfi di Castellammare e Carini.

The associated partners are: the Agency for the Protection and Development of the Coastline (APAL), the Association «Notre Grand Bleu» (NGB) and the Association for Development, Environment & Heritage (ADEP).



- **Awareness Day for Scouts:**

The NGB association has organized on September 11, 2022 a day of awareness for the Scouts, at the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir.



- **Training on financial strategy development:**

From September 24 to 27, 2022, the NGB Association has hosted the MedPAN in a training on the development and implementation of funding strategies for Mediterranean MPAs. MPA managers; NGOs and Administration participated, where they will explore the key factors of successful fundraising.

The participants made a visit to the Kuriat AMCP to better explore the intervention of the association in the framework of co-management with APAL in the management of the marine area.





- **Training for the Avicenna’s school students:**

The association NGB has hosted on November 17, 2022 the 4th grade students of the private primary school “Avicenna” to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the marine environment and especially on the conservation targets in the AMCP Kuriat especially the sea turtle *Caretta caretta*.



2. Exchange visits:

- **Visit of Kerkennah Ambassadors to the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir:**

Within the framework of the partnership between the two parties, the Association «Notre Grand Bleu» welcomed in the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir Monastir on August 01, 2022, a team of the Association Jeunes Science Kerkenah and the International Association of Students in Economics and Business (AIESEC) to exchange experiences and discover the activities of the association in the preservation of the marine environment



- **Scout Visit "أشبال الفلافل":**

The Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training Center has hosted on August 21, 2022 a regiment of scouts "أشبال الفلافل", where the Association «Notre Grand Bleu» trained them on the life cycle of sea turtles and the importance of Posidonia meadows on the Kuriat Islands and the Gulf of Monastir, as well as on aquatic birds and their role in the biological balance.



- **Visit of the Out Doors Sports Association Sfax:**

The Association «Notre Grand Bleu» has welcomed the Out Doors Sports Association Sfax at the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training, in order to learn about the activities of the association.



- **FAO visit to The Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir:**

Within the framework of the International Year of Fishing and Artisanal Aquaculture, the NGB Association has welcomed on September 06, 2022 the participants in the training course for young women in the field of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea 2022.



- **Scouts' awareness session:**

The NGB association has organized on September 11, 2022 an awareness day for the Scouts, at the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir.



- **Visit of the 3rd year students of INAT to the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training:**

The NGB association has hosted a group of students from the National Institute of Agronomic Sciences of Tunisia at the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir.

During the visit, the activities of the association were presented and the importance of scientific diving was discussed.



3. Visits of decision makers:

- **Visit of the United States Embassy:**

The NGB association, in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF North Africa, received on July 23, 2022 a team from the American Embassy to discover the activity of the Civil Society in the preservation of the marine environment in the bay of Monastir, the team also visited the scientific museum of the center and viewed the various documentaries made by the association to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the marine environment, including endangered species, the loggerhead turtle.



- **Visit of the Minister of Tourism:**

Ecological tourism in the Kuriat Islands was the focus of the visit of the Minister of Tourism Mr. Mohamed Moez Belhoussein on August 17, 2022 at the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir accompanied by a number of central executives of the Ministry, Mr. General Director of the Tunisian Office of Tourism, Mr. General Director of the National Office of the Tunisian handicrafts and executives concerned, Mr. Governor and Mr. Mayor of Monastir

During this visit, the prospects of ecotourism in Monastir were discussed and the experiences of the Association «Notre Grand Bleu» in this field were presented.

In addition, it was noted to expand the scope of pesca tourism to create a livelihood for seafarers and learn more about the cultural heritage.



- **Visit of the Director of the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean:**

The association «Notre Grand Bleu» has hosted the General Director of the General Council of Fisheries for the Mediterranean of the FAO to discuss about the installation of an aquaponics project in the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir.



- **CA MedFund visits to the NGB association:**

On October 18, 2022, the Association «Notre Grand Bleu» has hosted representatives of "The MedFund", and representatives of the Ministry of Environment, headed by Mr. Hedi Chbili, Director General of Environment and Quality of Life, and representatives of the Agency for the Protection and Development of the Coastline at the Mediterranean Training Center of

Monastir, in the presence of the Governor of Monastir where a presentation of the various activities of the association was established followed by a debate on the co-management within the Marine and Coastal Protected Area of the Kuriat Islands, with a workshop on the recovery of plastic traps, followed by a field visit to the Kuriat Islands to discover closely the different activities of the association.



4. Future projects:

- **Implementation of a pilot project of aquaponics and hydroponics:**

Within the framework of sustainable development, the association NGB has been thinking of implementing a pilot project of aquaponics and hydroponics in the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir. This pilot project aims to train people in this field in order to encourage them to practice agriculture and promote this sector. In addition, the development of this sector will create jobs as it will contribute to the improvement of the economic situation as well as the food security.

Since this idea was proposed, it had been discussed with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

- **The establishment of a kids' club:**

In order to create a society aware of the importance of the preservation of nature and the environment, the NGB association is looking for suitable ways to create a training club for children in this field and set goals and build a rational behavior towards the preservation of the environment because the association believes that the future of our planet depends on the awareness of the younger generation.

- **Training for teachers and students:**

In order to establish an environmental preservation culture and to integrate environmental education in the educational process, the NGB association has signed a partnership convention with the regional commission of education in Monastir to train teachers and students in the environmental field within the Mediterranean Center for Environmental Training of Monastir.