TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

Working at the crossroads of nature and culture
Note from Thymio Papayannis  
Founder / President of MedINA

“Culture is neither static nor related solely to the remains of past civilizations; it evolves and connects humankind’s past with its future. By embracing societal strengths, contemporary attitudes and creativity, cultural responses to environmental change can provide one of our most important strategies when facing the great environmental challenges of today.”

The Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA) was established in 2003 as a non-profit organisation based in Athens, Greece with a focus on the Mediterranean region and beyond. Its broader aim is to contribute to the development of a harmonious and respectful relationship between humankind and nature for the wellbeing of all.

MedINA is the brainchild of successful architect and planner Thymio Papayannis, a visionary and leading figure in the field of environmental and cultural heritage conservation who has made a significant contribution to ecological and landscape policy and research over the past thirty years. Originally focused on the integrated management of nature and culture through three priority areas – cultural values of wetlands, landscape and Sacred Natural Sites – in time MedINA broadened its scope and now works across three interrelated pillars: nature, culture and communities.

Our mission is to inspire people to recognise the value and connection between our natural and cultural heritage, and to work towards a just and sustainable future through research, working with communities, the exchange of ideas and knowledge, and networking in the Mediterranean and beyond.
About us

Our mission is to inspire people to recognise the value and connection between our natural and cultural heritage, and to work towards a just and sustainable future in the Mediterranean and beyond.

Areas of Action

Connecting natural & cultural heritage
we view nature and culture as two sides of the same coin

Traditional Knowledge as a source of innovation
we link our past with our future

Local solutions for sustainable development
we focus on community cooperation and local potential

Our tools

Interdisciplinary research

Working with communities

Exchange of knowledge & networking

Synthesising innovative ideas

Our Values

Diversity
Modesty
Passion
2020 Highlights in our Action Areas

Connecting natural & cultural heritage

We are proud partners in the newly launched Cultural H.I.D.R.A.N.T project which aims to re-introduce Hadrian’s Aqueduct from the Roman period to the contemporary urban life of Halandri in Athens in order to raise awareness of local cultural and natural heritage and contribute to citizens’ wellbeing.

We published 3 reports and 2 journal articles on the natural and cultural environment of Lemnos as part of the Terra Lemnia project on:
- the traditional agro-pastoral “mandra” system of Lemnos
- local knowledge on medicinal plant harvesting
- rural landscape changes
- biodiversity and soil status.

We developed and applied a landscape approach for cultural landscapes in Lemnos, in collaboration with partners from Morocco, Portugal and Lebanon.

We coordinated the #MedFoodHeroes campaign to raise awareness on the links between biodiversity, gastronomic heritage and sustainability.
Our team restored 26 traditional micro-dams that enhance both the aquifer and biodiversity on Kythera island in collaboration with local partners and the local community.

We actively supported the inscription of “the art of melipasto/melichloro cheese of Lemnos” in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

We led on the development of a Standard of Good Farming Practices on traditional, biodiversity friendly agro-pastoral practices in Lemnos, as the operationalization of 3 years of interdisciplinary research.
Local solutions for sustainable development

- We are supporting the Municipality of Thermo on the development of a local sustainable development plan.
- We led on the creation of a certification scheme “Agricultural Tradition and Biodiversity” for local products derived from low input biodiversity friendly agro-pastoral practices, currently piloted in Lemnos and Kythera islands.
- We established the “Network of Land Stewards” of Lemnos - 11 farmers that will voluntarily apply the certification scheme and use precision farming tools under our team’s guided training.
- We finalized the study for the extension of the trails network in Kythera - Kythera Trails.
- We published the “Legal Toolkit: A Legal Guide for the protection of rivers. The case of Aoos river, in Epirus”.
- We supported the inscription of the aspromytiko bean of Lemnos in the National Registry of crop landraces.
Our accomplishments this year were achieved through our close collaboration with trusted partners such as the University of Aegean, the Agricultural University of Athens, the Kytherian Foundation for Culture and Development, the Tour du Valat, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation and many others.

A big thank you is owed to all our funders this year; the Green Fund, Urban Innovative Actions, and the Greek Ministry of Culture. A very special thank you is reserved for the MAVA Foundation for Nature that has supported MedINA throughout the years and made our work possible in 2020 as well!