



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2028

MARVIVA
FOUNDATION

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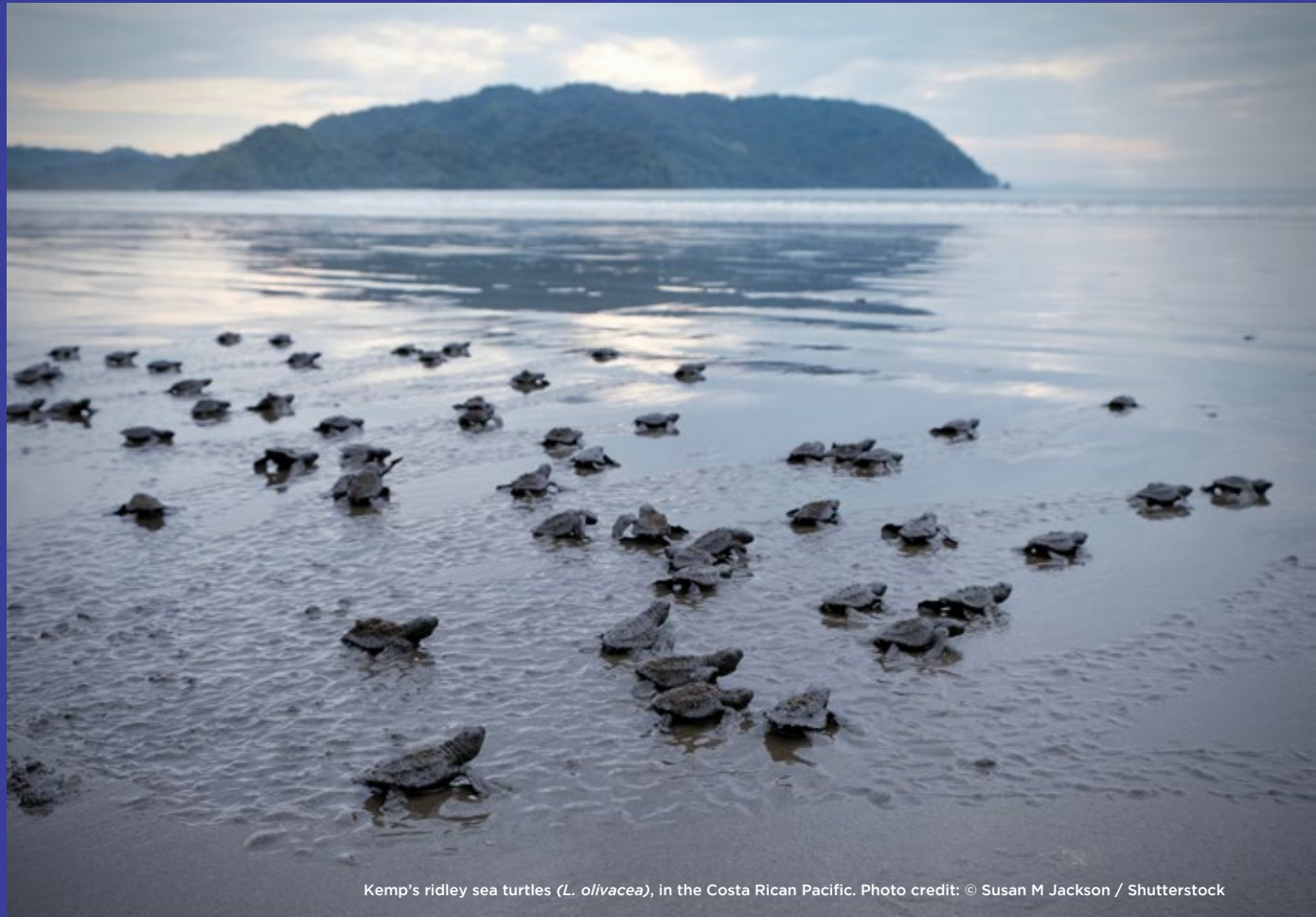
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Cite the document as: MarViva Foundation (2024).
MarViva Foundation Strategic Plan, period 2024-2028.
San José, Costa Rica, 29 pp.

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Kemp's ridley sea turtles (*L. olivacea*), in the Costa Rican Pacific. Photo credit: © Susan M Jackson / Shutterstock

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Giant oceanic manta ray (*Mobula birostris*). Photo credit: © Sascha Caballero / Shutterstock

Introduction



Figure 1. The Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) Region where the Foundation's primary focus is centered

MarViva Foundation has operated in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) since 2002, promoting the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and spaces. At present, MarViva has offices in Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia, with projects and programs of national, regional, and global scope. With track record of more than 20 years, the Foundation has positioned itself as a leading organization when it comes to marine conservation and sustainable coastal development in the region (Figure 1).

In view of the need to periodically update our Development Strategy, during 2023 the Foundation's staff and executive body advanced diverse planning exercises, aiming to determine the best course of action for the organization in the upcoming years. Resulting of such participatory process, this document presents the Development Strategy for the five-year period from 2024-2028, including the review of its mission, vision, objectives, and values, as well as the presentation of the strategic pillars.

This strategic and periodic redesign is a necessary and convenient exercise to maximize opportunities and reach our goals, in a fluctuating and challenging context. This is how MarViva is preparing to start a new phase in its institutional life with renewed energy and hope of always.



Opportunities AND CHALLENGES



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Diverse opportunities and challenges arise in the current context where MarViva operates, which must be dealt with and incorporated into the work of the next five-year period.

i. New Technologies

The emergence and development of new technologies are prominent amongst the main opportunities to optimize and maximize the Foundation's performance on multiple fields of its work.

MarViva must actively promote the incorporation of these new instruments in its daily activities. The strengthening and training of its staff on the use of cutting-edge technologies, like *big data*, information clusters, non-fungible tokens (NFT), *blockchain*, and artificial intelligence (AI)-based automation pose both a challenge and an opportunity of huge proportions.

It will also be necessary to establish partnerships with organizations and experts on relevant topics, to obtain financial and technical support from potential donors, and generally, to create the necessary conditions so MarViva can become a unique platform for the experimental and definitive unfolding of technologies that are consistent with its mission and programs throughout the ETP.

In this field, the aim is to develop interactive, AI-based tools of different standards and complexities, catered to diverse sectors and target-areas. This goal involves promoting the thoughtful use of technology, with a focus on inclusion, human rights, and socio-environmental impact, including the ability to analyze situations through the introduction of spatial, environmental, social, economic, technological, and political parameters for each area of interest.

ii. The Global Climate Crisis

The ETP region is being affected by climate change; this phenomenon's impact on the ocean and coastal zones has become much more obvious. While maintaining the organization's characteristic leadership in marine matters, MarViva must make sure that themes on mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change are present in all its strategic guidelines.

The societies, institutions, and political stakeholders in the region must be aware of the consequences of this phenomenon on our socio-ecological systems, as well as the available alternatives to mitigate and promote coastal adaptation and resilience. Problems like coral bleaching, the displacement of fishing resources and their impact on coastal communities, invasive species, coastal erosion, and sea level rise must be primary objectives in the Foundation's continuous communication strategy.



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iii. The High Seas

The need to preserve and sustainably manage the high seas has become palpable in recent years. The Foundation has been closely linked to actions that secured the recent approval of the Agreement for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), also known as the High Seas Treaty, within the framework of the United Nations Convention. Promoting this treaty's ratification and early implementation will be one of our priorities in the next five-year period. Specific actions to achieve its ratification in Latin American countries will be impelled by MarViva, in collaboration with other regional organizations that operate in our area of influence in Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia (primarily), and in Latin America in general.

Promotion of the Dome as a pilot area where the relevance of the BBNJ Agreement may be demonstrated is an opportunity which must be maximized. The first step is to document the scientific information and facilitate the dissemination of knowledge about this area, to later propose and support the implementation of governance models and zoning and sustainable management mechanisms in this site on which depend the ecologic and socioeconomic sustainability of the riverine countries.

iv. Raising Awareness on the Value and Importance of a Healthy Ocean

Throughout its institutional life, MarViva has increased the awareness about the ocean's relevance in the region. Taking advantage of this growing social conscience, the Foundation must strengthen its communications actions to accelerate access to information that is both appropriate and meaningful. In the next five-year period, broad-impact outreach activities will be carried out to highlight the value and importance of the sea within its overall work region.



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EXTERNAL **Factors**



When facing challenges and taking advantage of opportunities, MarViva must consider the existence of external factors that will allow it to focus its regional activities and execute its Strategic Plan more effectively.





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i. Increased Consumption of Marine Products and Services

Consumption of fishery products in the ETP region evidences sustained growth. Moreover, sectors like recreational fishing, beach tourism, scuba diving, and the sighting of cetaceans, sharks, and rays, are still growing strongly in these countries.

MarViva will promote the development of efficient and sustainable fish and seafood farming practices that help supply the existing demand, reducing the pressure on ecosystems and the need to import large quantities of fishery products. At the same time, it must encourage that the new services being promoted in marine and coastal areas are sourced responsibly, minimizing potential damage to the habitats and ecosystems. Actions like the consolidation of value chains that meet environmental and social sustainability criteria, the development of certifications, and the promotion of voluntary good practices are incentives and tools that will be strengthened to promote responsible use and consumption.

ii. Generalized Reduction of Marine Resources

Over the last two decades, landings of fishery products have been reduced to less than half, mainly due to the deterioration of fish populations. Similarly, the majority of the species of fishery interest that are exploited (for example sea bass, sharks, snappers, shrimp, among others) show a notable reduction in size, which is clear evidence of their weakening. MarViva will strengthen its efforts to assure the capture of these resources is carried through in a responsible way that causes the least damage possible to the marine ecosystem. Promotion of fishing within sustainable criteria, through sustainable market mechanisms, will remain as one of the Foundation's lines of work for the next five-year period.

One critical task to this end will be to contribute to reducing the impact of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing on these resources. Without a significant reduction in IUU, it will be impossible to ensure sustainable use of marine resources.

Likewise, a growing appreciation for decisions based on scientific knowledge has been observed in recent years, so MarViva will continue to promote the inclusion of the best technical evidence in decisions related to the management of these resources.



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iii. Heightened Poverty and Inequality in Coastal Populations

In general, coastal areas face the most pressing challenges regarding the reduction of poverty and inequality, the promotion of inclusion, and the generation of social progress. Because of this, MarViva will strengthen its actions through its strategic pillar of 'Coastal Community Strengthening', fundamental for the achievement of our mission. The aim is to ensure the creation of greater diversity of productive alternatives associated to marine resources and spaces, and that such extractive activities are sustainable under the economic and environmental points of view, seeking to achieve true wellbeing in communities dependent on the sea and its resources. The development of productive alternatives, different to fishing but associated with marine resources and environments, will continue to be one of MarViva's priorities. The effectiveness of these actions involves fostering the leadership, empowerment, and advocacy skills of the coastal populations. It also implies the analysis and generation of key indicators, which monitoring and attention are fundamental for the integral strengthening of coastal populations, hence promoting an effective incursion in sustainable productive opportunities.

iv. Limitations and Challenges of Relevant Institutions

The institutional framework involved in the protection, management and conservation of marine resources is varied and dispersed. Public entities face limitations in human, technical and financial resources that hinder the adequate fulfillment of their functions.

In face of such challenges, to attain the proposed objectives, MarViva will continue to support the relevant institutions regarding marine governance matters, promotion of institutional communication and coordination, strengthening and operationalizing of national marine policy instruments, personnel training, and the provision of materials or equipment in action areas of common interest.



Photo credit: © MarViva Foundation



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v. MarViva's Image

MarViva has positioned itself as a scientific and technical reference in the promotion of strategies and measures to contribute to marine conservation and sustainability. In partnership with local and international stakeholders, the Foundation will continue to honor its credibility and reliability, and to strengthen internal capacities and multi-sectoral collaborations to promote proposals based on rigorous evidence, transparency and stakeholders with the interested parties.


vi. Relation with Relevant National and Regional Stakeholders

A comparative advantage of MarViva is its regional work approach, which allows it to address marine conservation and sustainable development challenges and solutions that concern local, national and regional stakeholders, including authorities, institutions, scientific community, productive sectors, coastal population, donors, and society in general. Its presence in Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia facilitates the development of replicable and scalable experiences, and the creation of synergies between the countries and their organizations.

vii. Relations with Regional Media

MarViva maintains a strong relationship with the media in different areas, such as television, radio, and written press. This strength will also be used to raise awareness about the sea and its relevance to our countries.





INTERNAL **Factors**

i. Sustained Commitment from Viva Trust

MarViva enjoys financial and operational sustainability with the backing of the Viva Trust, which guarantees an annual contribution of unrestricted for the continuity of its operations. VIVA Trust also provided the seed capital for a reserve fund that transcends project financing cycles. Being part of the Viva Trust enables MarViva to establish collaboration with other Viva Ecosystem organizations, such as AVINA, Fundes, VIVA Idea and Masisa, which work in complementary issues in contribution to sustainable development in the Latin American region.

ii. A Multidisciplinary Team

Throughout the years, MarViva has constituted a high-level multidisciplinary team, capable of identifying solutions and executing projects that demand multiple skills and knowledge. MarViva will support capacity development and continuous strengthening of its work team, ensuring strategic, integral, and technical excellence focus in all its actions.





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iii. Succession that Brings New Approaches

MarViva is a constantly changing organization that gets updated and looks for new ways to achieve its objectives. As of January 2024, MarViva renewed its Executive Management. Building on the successful trajectory and achievements under the previous administration, this succession will strengthen the Foundation's legacy and work in face of new challenges and opportunities to contribute significantly in the framework of our mission in favor of the conservation and sustainable management of the ocean and its resources.

Mission

To promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

Vision

A healthy and biodiverse ocean that generates well-being for the present and future generations.

Goals

MarViva aims to:

- » Increase the awareness of the authorities, civil society, and the general population on the relevance and value of the ocean and its resources.
- » Reduce marine plastic pollution.
- » Achieve responsible fishing.
- » Eradicate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU).
- » Achieve marine and coastal spatial planning.
- » Improve the social well-being of coastal communities, providing productive and sustainable alternatives based on marine and coastal resources.
- » Consolidate the effective and efficient operation of marine protected areas.
- » Strengthen market instruments in the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources.

Strategic Objectives



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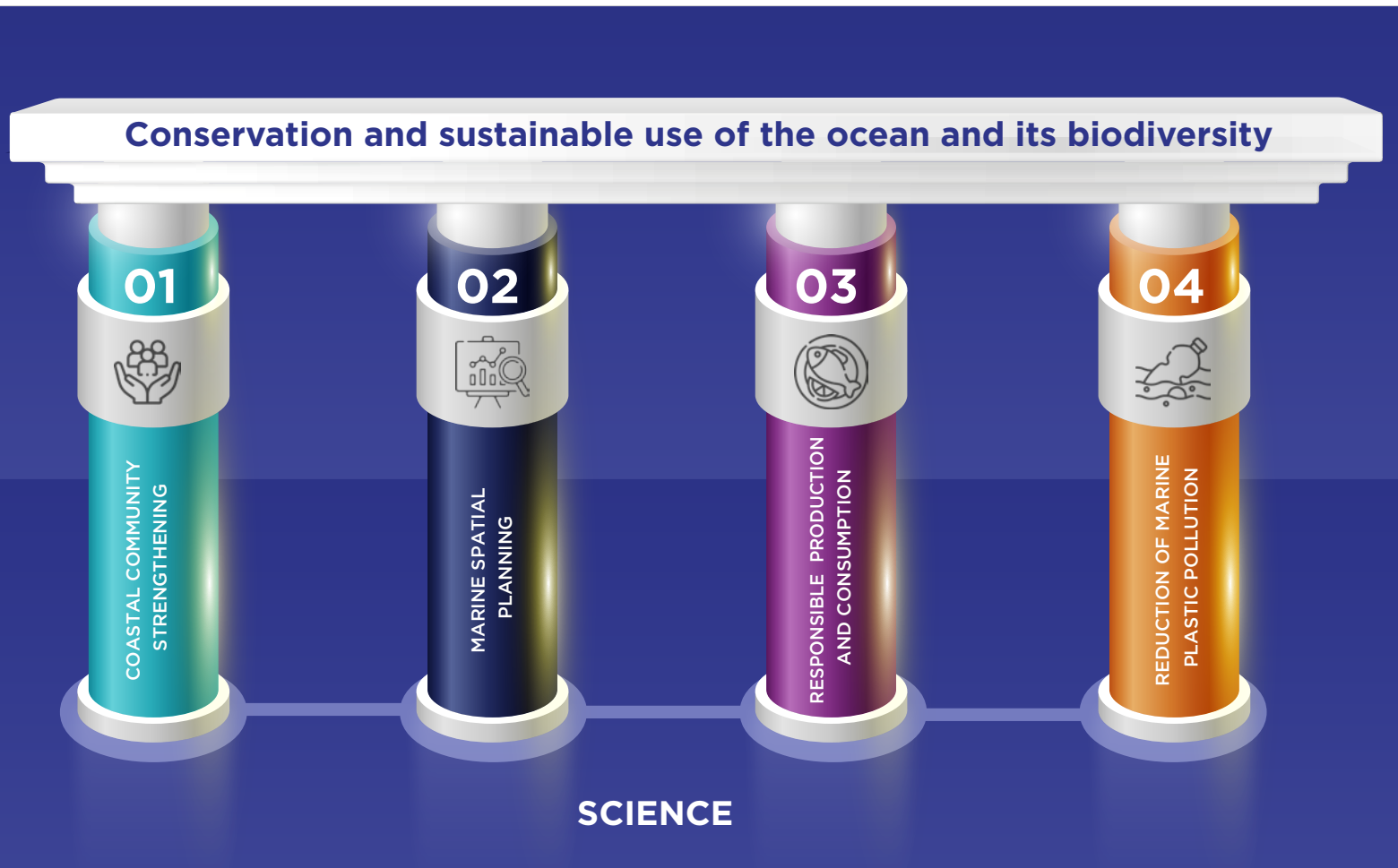
- » Promote spatial planning of coastal and marine activities in the ETP.
- » Develop a trustworthy and accessible information system for those who make decisions related to the exploitation and use of marine and coastal resources.
- » Position MarViva as the leading organization on high seas matters in the ETP region.
- » Influence national and regional agendas regarding the effects of climate change on marine resources and coastal communities.
- » Encourage and promote value chains that simultaneously achieve a balance between responsible use and consumption of marine products and services in the ETP.
- » Develop synergies in the search for productive alternatives.
- » Promote social progress in coastal communities in the ETP.
- » Promote the reduction of plastic pollution in the oceans.

General Value Proposition

MarViva will implement initiatives and provide information, knowhow, and instruments supported by science and formal knowledge, of high relevance to biodiversity and marine health, in partnership with the authorities, scientific community, civil society, media, and coastal communities in the ETP.



Strategic Pillars



MarViva groups its activities into four strategic pillars supported by a technical and scientific base (Figure 2).

Figure 2. MarViva's strategic pillars, supported by a scientific base

1. Coastal Community Strengthening

MarViva supports the organization of community-based groups so that they can influence local, regional, and national policies that impact their wellbeing and livelihoods through the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. To this end, MarViva will continue strengthening the local empowerment of these stakeholders for the effective exercise of their rights, their integration in local, national, or regional discussion forums, the training of their members, and the provision of basic equipment for their work.

The periodical analysis of the Social Progress of marine-dependent coastal communities must be documented to monitor and assess the advances, setbacks, or standstills in the wellbeing of these populations, and to encourage substantial improvements before the relevant stakeholders. Through synergies with other organizations, MarViva will promote the implementation of specific activities that cover critical necessities, particularly aimed for the development of productive alternatives related to the ocean and its resources.



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2. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)

MarViva will continue to promote spatial planning in critical regions of the ETP, especially in areas where human uses of marine and coastal spaces and resources are in conflict with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The collection of ecological and socioeconomic data will be a priority to promote the adoption of management measures based on the best scientific evidence available.

The involvement and participation of interested authorities and users in the planning and establishment of participatory governance mechanisms must be critical outputs of every MSP process. The identification of specific zones for different uses (including conservation) will be part of multisectoral discussions to agree on the regulations for each site. MarViva will continue to provide support and technical, legal, and scientific knowledge to the stakeholders and governmental entities responsible for leading the planification.

3. Responsible Consumption and Production of Marine Products and Services

Through market mechanisms (value chains, certifications, facilitation of commercial links, among others), Marviva will continue to support the fishing and tourism sectors in the development of sustainable use and commercialization dynamics, ensuring compliance with environmental, legal, and social responsibility criteria, as well as consumer awareness, among others.

4. Reduction of Marine Plastic Pollution

The entry of plastics into the ocean is one of the most pressing problems faced by societies. MarViva will increase its efforts to promote reduced production and use of disposable or single-use plastics, problematic plastics, and plastics of concern, which are currently the main source of marine pollution, as well as of abandoned nets that generate coastal pollution and ghost fishing.

The enactment and adoption of international agreements, laws, public policies, and national strategies, regulations, and local agreements to reduce the production and usage of these types of materials will remain as essential core in MarViva's work during the next five-year period. To this end, the Foundation will continue to work with international, national, and municipal organizations to achieve the approval and implementation of projects that reduce the impact of plastics in the ocean.



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Products and Services

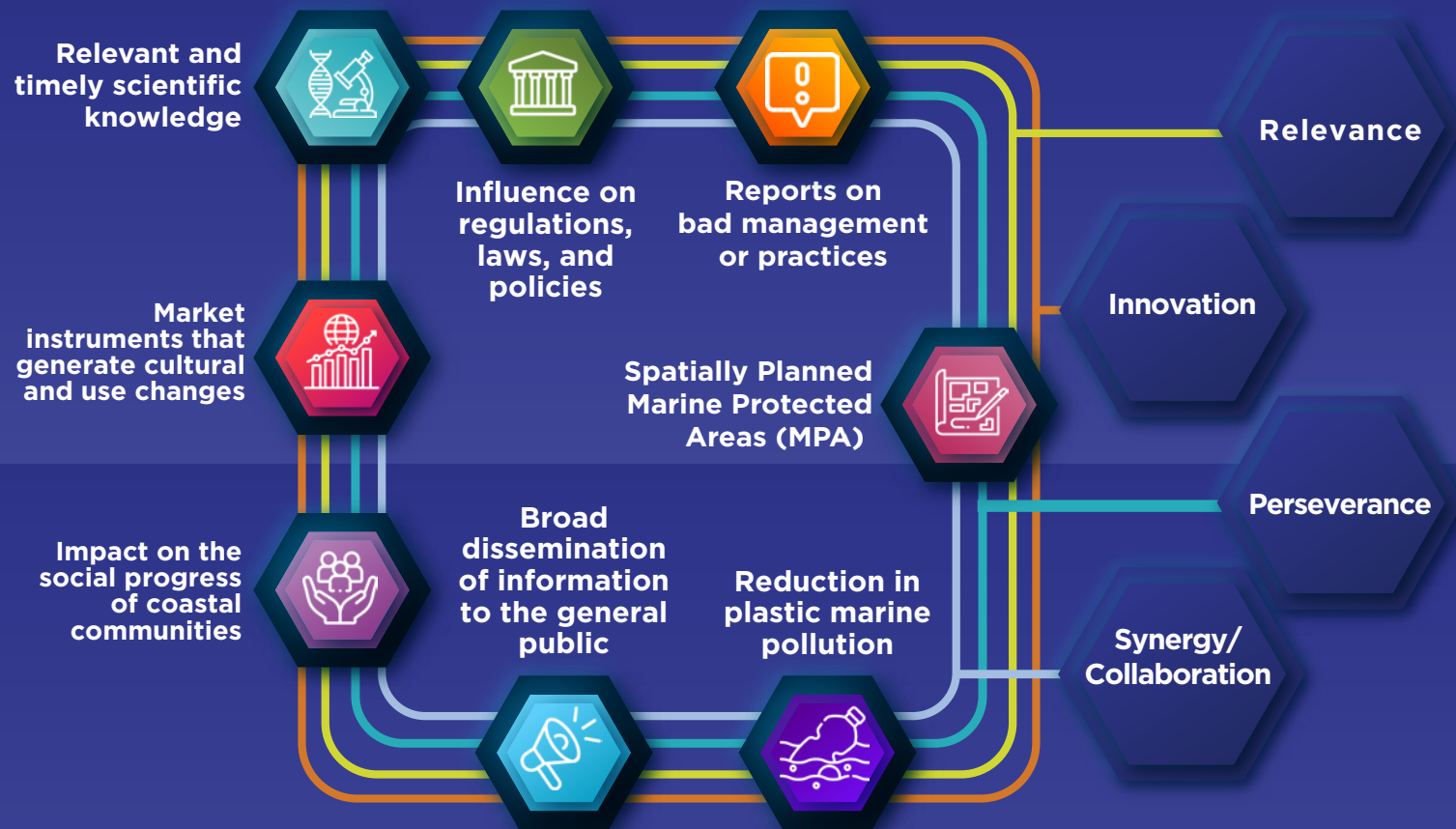


Figure 3. MarViva products and services, transversal to the strategic pillars and internal organizational culture

Target Population Segments

The different products and services generated by the organization will be offered to a diverse multisectorial audience that includes:

- I. Formal authorities**
- II. Communication media and social networks**
- III. Academia and NGOs**
- IV. Coastal communities**
- V. Fishing sectors**
- VI. Donors**
- VII. Productive sectors**
- VIII. General public**



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The Future Starts Now

MarViva's Board of Directors, Executive Directorate and staff begin this five-year period committed and motivated to fulfill the objectives of our Strategic Plan 2024-2028 under principles of responsibility, technical and scientific thoroughness, transparency and collaboration.

We are grateful for the support of our donors and local, national and international partners who contribute to the exercise of our mission in favor of marine conservation and sustainability in the ETP.



MarViva Foundation, established since 2002, is a regional non-governmental and non-profit organization. Our mission is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, with vision of healthy and biodiverse oceans in benefit of the present and future generations.

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Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*). Photo credit: © orifec_a31 / Shutterstock