

CONSORTIUM MEMBERS



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PLASTIC BUSTERS

for a Mediterranean  
 free from litter



## THE CHALLENGE OF MARINE LITTER IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

It is universally recognized that marine litter, in particular plastic litter, poses a global challenge, directly affecting marine and coastal life and ecosystems and potentially also human health as also underlined by G7 Summits. Globally, plastic - including microplastics forms the highest percentage of marine litter (~80%). Plastic debris accumulates in semi-enclosed basins, such as the Mediterranean Sea, to a greater degree than in the open oceans. Mediterranean Sea is defined as one of the most impacted areas by marine litter world-wide. The project Plastic Busters for a Mediterranean free from litter is an initiative led by the University of Siena SDSN MED and being coordinated with fifteen other partner institutions from the Mediterranean region. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea through the promotion of the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention - IG.21/9). Plastic Busters is the first project at basin scale that binds the Southern and Northern Mediterranean countries on the issue of Marine Litter under the umbrella of UNEP/MAP and Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), with 10 countries already involved in the project and 12 countries endorsing the project. The project labelled by the 43 UfM Member countries at the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on February 16, 2016.

## THE PLASTIC BUSTERS APPROACH

Plastic Busters represents a comprehensive, new approach which can complete our understanding of the challenges and move the entire Mediterranean basin towards declines in marine litter. The main objectives and activities of the project focus on:

a) addressing marine litter related knowledge

gaps via monitoring and assessment of both micro - and macroplastics in the environment (abundance, characterization and identification of hot spot areas) and the biota (presence and effect on bioindicator species), working at a basin scale with a standardised methodology.

b) Developing and implementing concrete mitigation actions to prevent, reduce, identify convergence areas and reduce/remove marine litter at basin scale.

c) Developing actions to enhance the awareness of stakeholders and catalyse change in their perceptions and attitudes towards waste at basin scale, under the umbrella of UNEP/MAP and UfM;

d) Enforce the governance of the mitigation and reduction of marine litter, under the umbrella of UNEP/MAP Marine Litter Action Plan, at basin scale in a harmonize way.

## WORK PACKAGES

The project's main lines of activities are clustered in five work packages (WPs):

□ **WP1** coordinates and manages the activities in the project, and deals with the monitoring and sustainability aspects;

□ **WP2** addresses the information gaps and needs with regards to marine litter, complements the existing assessment in the region, deals with the development and implementation of harmonized monitoring methods based on UNEP/MAP monitoring guidance and other projects;

□ **WP3** develops and coordinates the implementation of the demonstration projects showcasing actions to prevent, reduce and remove marine litter based on the measures provided by the Regional Plan (Art. 9 and 10);

□ **WP4**, on the basis of the results of WP2 and WP3, assesses the status of the implementation of the Regional Plan at national, sub-regional and regional level, identifies, and prioritizes additional prevention and mitigation measures to tackle

marine litter in the region;

□ **WP5** designs and coordinates the implementation of awareness raising campaigns tailor-made to the needs of the marine litter stakeholders and ESD programmes targeted to the educational community.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- A comprehensive assessment of the status (amounts, composition, and impacts on marine species & human health) of marine litter at basin scale;
- A hotspot analysis/mapping of marine litter accumulation areas in the Mediterranean;
- A set of comprehensive recommendations developed based on sound scientific evidence and findings; strengthened involvement and participation of 30 regional marine litter experts;
- At least 10 demonstration projects showcasing specific prevention and mitigation actions;
- A comprehensive assessment of the status of implementation of the regional plan on Marine Litter;
- A package of updated measures to fully tackle marine litter towards a litter free Mediterranean;
- Awareness campaigns carried out in at least 15 countries of the Mediterranean.



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