



5.055M €
project budget

4.296M €
ERDF/IPA

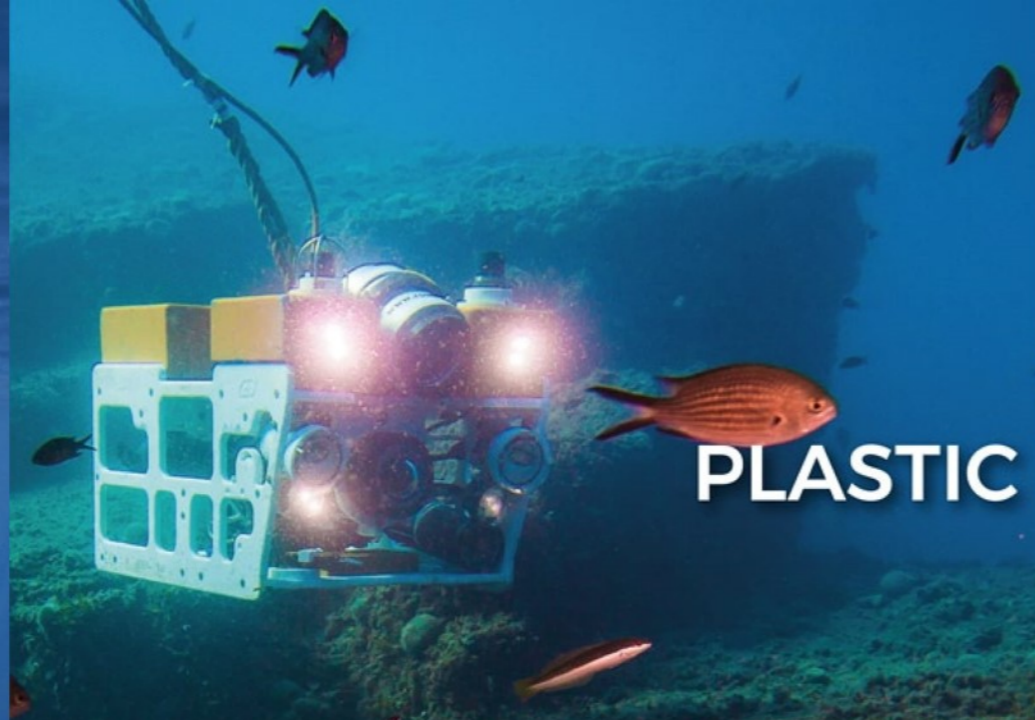
48 months
project duration

PLASTIC BUSTERS MPAs

PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY FROM PLASTICS IN MEDITERRANEAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS



Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund



PLASTIC BUSTERS MPAs in a nutshell

THE ISSUE AT STAKE

The Mediterranean is one of the seas most affected by marine litter worldwide. The threats marine litter poses to wildlife and ecosystems are increasingly documented in scientific literature, with impacts varying from entanglement and ingestion, to bio-accumulation and bio-magnification of toxics released from plastics, to damages to benthic habitats and species.

The Barcelona Convention's Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive have helped things advance in the right direction. Yet there is still a long way ahead towards implementing policy commitments and effectively reducing marine litter and the risks it poses to Mediterranean marine wildlife.

To-date the impacts of marine litter on marine biota, in particular on those species inhabiting **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** remain poorly understood and addressed. But one thing is clear: that prevention and mitigation measures are urgently needed.



Plastic Busters MPAs is an Interreg Med funded project aiming to maintain biodiversity and preserve natural ecosystems in pelagic and coastal marine protected areas by consolidating Mediterranean efforts against marine litter.

The project entails actions addressing the whole management cycle of marine litter, from monitoring and assessment to prevention and mitigation; it also foresees actions to strengthen networking between and among coastal and pelagic MPAs in the Mediterranean.

The project deploys the multidisciplinary strategy and common framework of action developed within the Plastic Busters initiative led by the University of Siena and the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Solutions Network (plasticbusters.unisi.it). This initiative frames the priority actions needed to tackle marine litter in the Mediterranean and was labelled under the Union for the Mediterranean in 2016, gathering the political support of 43 Euro Mediterranean countries.

Plastic Busters MPAs has a budget of € 5.055 million and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Fund. With a starting date of February 1st, 2018, the project will end by the 31st of January 2022 (4 years duration).



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PROJECT PARTNERS



ASSOCIATED PARTNERS



plasticbustersmpas.interreg-med.eu
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WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WORK

Plastic Busters MPAs brings together 15 implementing partners and 17 associated partners from 8 countries, namely Albania, Cyprus, Croatia, France, Italy, Greece, Slovenia and Spain. Plastic Busters MPAs applies an integrated, multidisciplinary and transnational strategy in pilot Mediterranean MPAs, with the main goal to protect biodiversity, particularly endangered species and their natural habitats, from the impacts of marine litter.

Reaching this goal requires joint, concerted and coordinated actions at cross-border level with a very wide geographical coverage and the involvement of a full palette of stakeholders. With a project partnership made of diversely skilled institutional, operational and associated partners, Plastic Busters MPAs ensures a pluralistic, creative and dynamic approach in its implementation.

Partners

- Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (Italy)
- University of Siena - Department of Physical Sciences, Earth and Environment (Italy)
- Corsican Agency For Environment (France)
- Regional Government of the Balearic Islands - Department of Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries (Spain)
- Management Agency of Zakynthos National Marine Park (Greece)
- Tuscan Archipelago National Park (Italy)
- Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (Greece)
- Spanish Oceanographic Institute - Balearic Centre of Oceanography (Spain)
- Hellenic Centre for Marine Research - Institute of Oceanography (Greece)
- French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (France)
- Catalan Waste Agency - Regional Activity Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Spain)
- Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy, Special Secretariat for Water (Greece)
- Albanian Ministry of Environment - Directorate of Biodiversity and Protected Areas (Albania)
- Ministry of Environment and Energy of Croatia (Croatia)
- University of Split - Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy (Croatia)

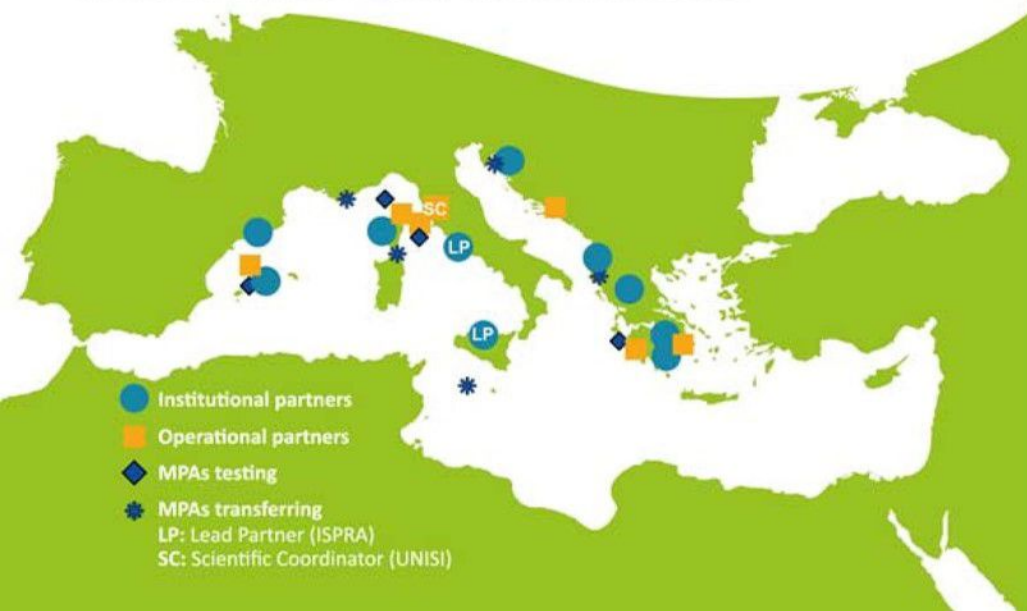


Photo: Lucille Guhenneuf (ICP/RAC)

Photo: Mario Urcia

WHAT WE DO

Plastic Busters MPAs provides a comprehensive, multifaceted and coordinated approach to fight marine litter in Mediterranean coastal and marine protected areas towards healthy marine ecosystems.

Plastic Busters MPAs' main lines of action focus on:



Defining and testing harmonized methodologies for monitoring marine litter: Plastic Busters MPAs will elaborate a harmonized approach for monitoring macro- and micro-litter in Mediterranean pelagic and coastal MPAs, based on recent scientific and policy advances.



Assessing the marine litter impacts on biota dwelling in MPAs: The harmonized methodologies for marine litter monitoring will be tested in selected sites and the results will feed into a comprehensive diagnostic analysis of the impacts of marine litter on biodiversity and endangered species in Med MPAs.



Identifying marine litter hotspots in MPAs: Plastic Busters MPAs will develop a forecasting model to identify marine litter hotspots in Mediterranean MPAs. The model will provide valuable information to support targeted marine litter prevention and mitigation actions in the most affected Mediterranean MPAs.



Showcasing marine litter prevention and mitigation measures: Plastic Busters MPAs will set-up and implement at least 10 marine litter demonstration projects in pilot MPAs. The demos will showcase MPA-relevant marine litter measures and the learned lessons will be captured in a set of comprehensive guidelines to support replication actions.



Building capacities and transferring knowledge on marine litter issues: Plastic Busters MPAs will implement fit-for-purpose knowledge transfer, capitalization and replication mechanisms to create a truly enabling environment for concrete, effective and continuous actions against marine litter in a network of Mediterranean MPAs.



Setting up a joint governance plan for managing marine litter in pelagic and coastal MPAs: The project will mainstream its results and ensure their uptake via a joint governance plan for managing marine litter in pelagic and coastal MPAs. The plan will consolidate the knowledge gained throughout the life-cycle of the project and will empower MPA managers, decision makers and other stakeholders to undertake coordinated and targeted actions against marine litter.

WHAT WE EXPECT TO ACHIEVE



Quantitative and qualitative diagnosis of the impacts of marine litter in Mediterranean MPAs and on marine biodiversity, including endangered species;



Enhanced protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems in pelagic and coastal MPAs through targeted prevention and mitigation actions;



Accelerated knowledge transfer to Mediterranean MPAs and scaling-up of best practices to tackle marine litter through enhanced institutional uptake of project results.



Photo: Cristina Panet (UNISI)