

Contribution to the Mediterranean monitoring and reporting programs for marine litter prevention and mitigation

WES-BCA Activity: C1 REG-4

Kick-off Meeting

Wednesday, 12 November, 2025

10:30 – 13:00 CET (On-line)

Introduction to the project

The “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) in the Neighbourhood South region” project aims to improve the protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity, and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region. It seeks to strengthen the formulation and enforcement of relevant policies in the Partner Countries and support the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention.

Implemented from November 2024 to November 2027, the project covers eight Partner Countries in the Middle East and North Africa and is funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG-MENA). Building on the experience and achievements of its predecessor projects (WES, SWIM-H2020 SM, SWIM SM, Horizon 2020 CB/MEP), WES-BCA ensures continuity while integrating new institutional, scientific, and technical developments. It promotes regional exchange of good practices and lessons learned, complemented by targeted national activities that address specific priorities.

The project is implemented through two complementary components: Component I, focusing on Water, Biodiversity and Environment, and Component II, dedicated to Communication and Outreach with an emphasis on Climate Action. Within Component I, five thematic topics are addressed, including Topic 1: Prevention and Reduction of Pollution and Topic 2: Curbing Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter, which are of particular relevance to ongoing regional and national efforts.

General background

The Mediterranean Sea, despite its exceptional biodiversity and cultural heritage, remains among the most affected regions globally by marine litter, with plastics, mainly single-use items, representing 80–90% of the waste found. This pollution continues to threaten ecosystems, human health, and key economic sectors such as tourism and fisheries. While notable progress has been achieved through the Barcelona Convention’s Ecosystem Approach (EcAp), its Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP), and the Regional Plan on Marine Litter, as well as through EU policies like the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, hundreds of tonnes of plastics still enter the sea daily, mainly from urban centres, rivers, and fishing activities.

Persistent challenges include data gaps, limited implementation of monitoring protocols, and insufficient resources. In response, regional and international initiatives, such as the EU Plastics Strategy, the Single-Use Plastics Directive, and the UfM-labelled Plastic Busters Initiative, have intensified efforts to curb plastic pollution. The 2025 Nice Conference further strengthened collaboration, while several Mediterranean countries, including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan, are advancing national strategies. Building on this momentum, regional and national programmes, projects, and country-level initiatives have played a key role in implementing monitoring and reporting actions, enhancing capacities, and integrating marine litter prevention into Mediterranean policies. In this context, WES-BCA is launching a regional activity titled “Contribution to the Mediterranean Monitoring and Reporting Programmes for Marine Litter Prevention and Mitigation.”. This activity aims to enhance coordination, foster knowledge exchange, strengthen capacities, and promote concrete solutions for addressing marine litter across the region.

Objectives of the regional activity

This regional activity aims to support Mediterranean Partner Countries in enhancing the implementation of marine litter monitoring and reporting Programmes for all matrixes and to contribute to more effective reporting and mitigation measures aligned with the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management under the Barcelona Convention.

Specific Objectives:

- Promote the wide uptake and implementation of the marine litter monitoring methodologies (for all marine matrixes) that have been adopted by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention;
- Facilitate, through a webinar, regional exchange of national experiences, case studies, and best practices related to marine litter monitoring and reporting as well as on mitigation strategies;
- Collect inputs, through a desk study and exchanges with PCs (before, during and after the webinar), and prepare an Assessment Report that compiles best practices, tools, and methodologies to support the implementation of regional and national marine litter monitoring and reporting programmes, enhancing informed decision-making and policy development.

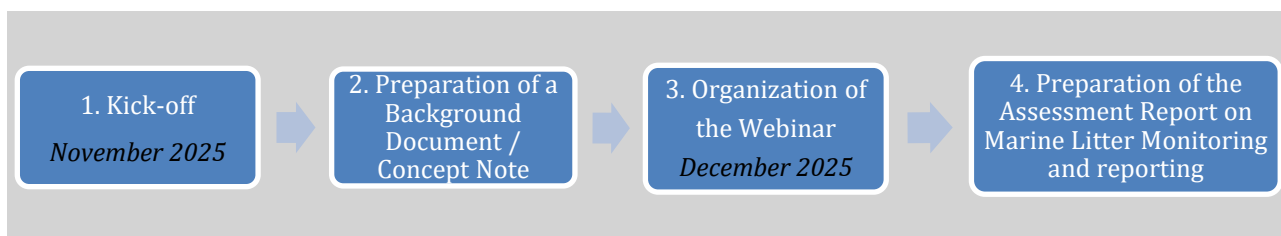
Overall structure of the regional activity

This activity consists of a regional webinar bringing together key stakeholders from across the Mediterranean region. The webinar will serve as a platform to exchange knowledge, showcase initiatives, and discuss experiences related to marine litter monitoring and reporting, in order to ensure effective prevention and management. Following the webinar, a comprehensive assessment regional report will be prepared, compiling and analyzing relevant initiatives, experiences, and good practices related to marine litter Monitoring and Reporting across the Mediterranean. The report will also include key recommendations, developed on the basis of feedback gathered from country representatives and expert deskwork.



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The main components and implementation steps of this WES-BCA regional activity are outlined below and will be further detailed in the following sections.



Objective of this Kick-off Meeting

This remote Kick-off Meeting aims to introduce the activity to the national focal points and country representatives, present the proposed workplan and methodology, and discuss logistical arrangements. It will also provide an opportunity to identify key stakeholders and agree on the timing and format of the upcoming regional webinar.



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AGENDA

10:15-10:30	Connection to the platform Participants join and test audio/video connections
10:30-10:50	Opening remarks - Prof. Michael Scoullas, WES-BCA Team Leader - Mr. Youssef Tadros, Programme Manager, DG MENA, European Commission
10:50-10:55	WES Video on Plastic Pollution and Single-Use Plastics (SUPs)- Short version
10:55-11:10	Presentation of the Activity: Overview of the objectives, structure, and expected outcomes Mr. Anis Ismail, Key Environment Expert, WES-BCA
11:10-11:30	Introduction of the Expert Team and Stakeholders Presentation of the WES-BCA experts and brief introduction by country representatives
11:30-12:00	Presentation and discussion on the Background Document and Assessment Report: Proposed structure and contents - Dr. Mirco Haseler, International Marine Litter Monitoring Expert, WES-BCA - Open discussion and feedback
12:00-12:10	WES Video Guideline for monitoring macrolitter on the seafloor
12:10-12:30	Preparations for the Regional Webinar: Expected contributions and outcomes from experts, speakers and participants - Dr. Sana Ben Ismail, Marine Litter Monitoring Expert, WES-BCA - Dr. Emad Adly, Stakeholder Engagement and Impact Assessment Expert, WES-BCA - Open discussion and feedback
12:30-12:50	Inputs and Case Studies for the Regional Webinar: Identification of contacts, institutions, projects, and potential country presentations. - Dr. Mirco Haseler, International Marine Litter Monitoring Expert, WES-BCA - Open discussion and feedback
12:50-13:00	Conclusions and Next Steps: Key Takeaways and follow-up actions Prof. Michael Scoullas, WES-BCA Team Leader

For more information: www.wes-bca.eu

