



Marine Litter Monitoring and Reporting

WES, 3rd February 2026

Alessandra Sensi,
Head of Sector
Environment, Green and Blue Economy



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The UfM at a glance

*Mission to enhance **cooperation, dialogue, integration, stability, and sustainable development at regional level** through the implementation of concrete projects and initiatives with tangible impacts*

43 Members

27 EU members and 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. Their Senior Officials meet regularly to oversee and coordinate the activities of the UfM.

2 Co-Presidents

The EU and Jordan have assumed the Northern and Southern co-presidency since 2012, embodying the UfM principle of co-ownership.

1 Secretariat

Based in Barcelona, the Secretariat is the operational platform of the UfM.

UfM operates at different levels

- UfM Ministerial Declarations
- UfM Platforms of Dialogue/Working Groups
- Projects

Convergence around common agenda/s

Ownership of the 43 EuroMed countries

Pooling of technical, human and financial resources around the joint priorities

Marine Litter



2021 UfM MINISTERIAL DECLARATIONS

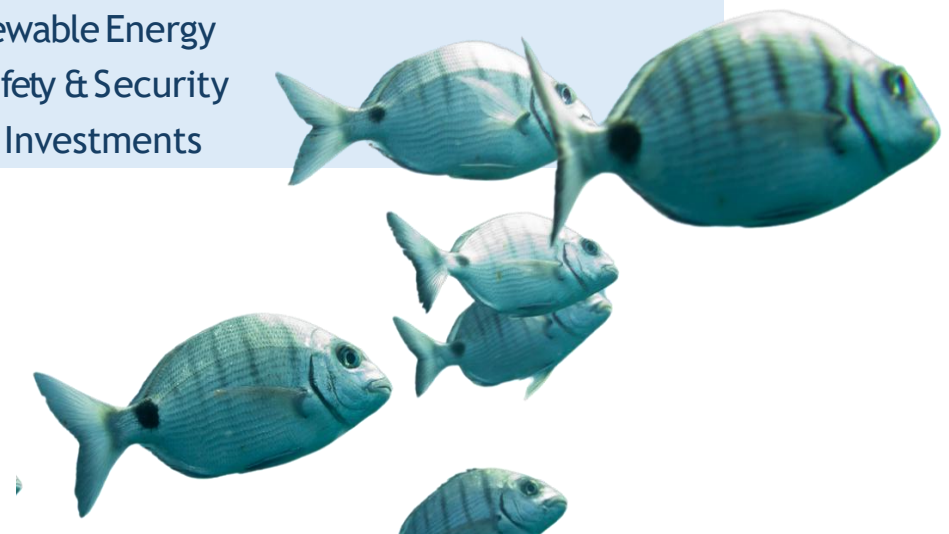
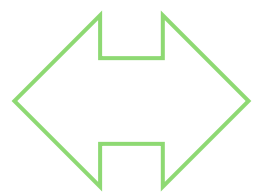
- ✓ 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment (Green Economy) and Climate Action - October 2021
- ✓ 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, February 2021



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UfM SBE Roadmap

- ✓ Governance & the future of sea basin strategies
- ✓ Marine research, innovation, skills, careers & employment
- ✓ Sustainable food from the sea: fisheries & aquaculture
- ✓ Sustainable, climate-neutral & zero-pollution maritime transport & ports
- ✓ Interactions between ML & the blue economy
- ✓ Coastal & maritime tourism
- ✓ MSP&ICZM
- ✓ Marine Renewable Energy
- ✓ Maritime Safety & Security
- ✓ Sustainable Investments



2030GreenerMed

UfM AGENDA FOR A GREENER MEDITERRANEAN

TOWARDS 2030: AGENDA FOR A GREENER MED
Contributing to Achieving the Environmental SDGs in the Mediterranean
(2030GreenerMed)

Support the transition towards a Green, Circular and Socially Inclusive Economy, based on sustainable consumption and production practices and nature-based solutions.
(Axis 1)

Prevent and reduce pollution on land, air, and sea.
(Axis 2)

Protect, preserve, manage, and restore natural resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated ecosystem approach, including terrestrial, marine, and coastal dimensions.
(Axis 3)



MINISTERIAL DECLARATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY

- ✓ 1st UfM UfM Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy, November 2015
- ✓ 2nd UfM UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, February 2021

10 Ministerial priorities:

1. Governance & the future of sea basin strategies
2. Marine research, innovation, skills, careers & employment
3. Sustainable food from the sea: fisheries & aquaculture
4. Sustainable, climate-neutral & zero-pollution maritime transport & ports
5. Interactions between ML & the blue economy
6. Coastal & maritime tourism
7. MSP&ICZM
8. Marine Renewable Energy
9. Maritime Safety & Security
10. Sustainable Investments





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2030 Greener Med
AGENDA FOR A GREENER
MEDITERRANEAN

IDENTIFIED KEY ACTIONS UNDER 2030 GREENER MED THEMATIC AXIS 1

- KA1.1.** Support Sustainable Consumption and Production
- KA1.2.** Increase Resource Efficiency
- KA1.3.** Adopt innovative solutions along the entire value chain (across sectors and industries, urban and rural)
- KA1.4.** Promote changes in business practices, trade, public policy
- KA1.5.** Promote changes in education, behaviour and lifestyles
- KA1.6.** Engage all stakeholders (private, public and society/consumer level) and raise awareness

IDENTIFIED KEY ACTIONS UNDER 2030 GREENER MED THEMATIC AXIS 2

- KA2.1.** Strengthen mechanisms for pollution prevention and reduction from different sources through application of a source-to-sea/ridge-to-reef approach
- KA2.2.** Put a particular focus on plastic pollution and marine litter as well as other inorganic and organic pollution sources
- KA2.3.** Facilitate investments in infrastructure.
- KA2.4.** Reduce chemical pollution
- KA2.5.** Improve soil quality
- KA2.6.** Reduce and control air pollution
- KA2.7.** Reduce landfilled waste

IDENTIFIED KEY ACTIONS UNDER 2030 GREENER MED THEMATIC AXIS 3

- KA3.1.** Support actions that preserve, protect and/or restore terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems, natural capital and biodiversity
- KA3.2.** Promote the sustainable management of landscapes, seascapes and coastal areas in the Mediterranean
- KA3.3.** Promote an integrated ecosystem-based approach to managing terrestrial, coastal and marine natural resources
- KA3.4.** Focus on safeguarding/improving key ecosystem functions and services (in protected and productive areas)
- KA3.5.** Promote transboundary cooperation
- KA3.6.** Mainstream biodiversity in key sectors
- KA3.7.** Protect on-farm biodiversity in agro-ecosystems
- KA3.8.** Promote Disaster Risk Reduction with a special focus on extreme events including droughts and floods, and forest fires
- KA3.9.** Promote nature-based solutions

✓ **Key actions by Axis**



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From policy to implementation

UfM Environment, Green Economy and Sustainable Blue Economy

Building Blocks

- UfM Ministerial Declaration/s
- UfM Env Agenda 'GreenerMed' and SBE Roadmap for implementation
- Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Mechanism/s

Clear priorities for implementation; Political, Technical and financial convergence

- *centered around the three axes of the 2030GreenerMed, namely green, circular, inclusive economy; pollution with a focus on prevention aspects; biodiversity/ecosystems management and restoration*
- *And the 10 Sustainable Blue economy priorities*

Pooling of resources

- *in the implementation of international and regional conventions, such as the GBF*
- *fostering collaboration via regional projects and a multi-stakeholders approach, combining dialogue/actions, process/projects*

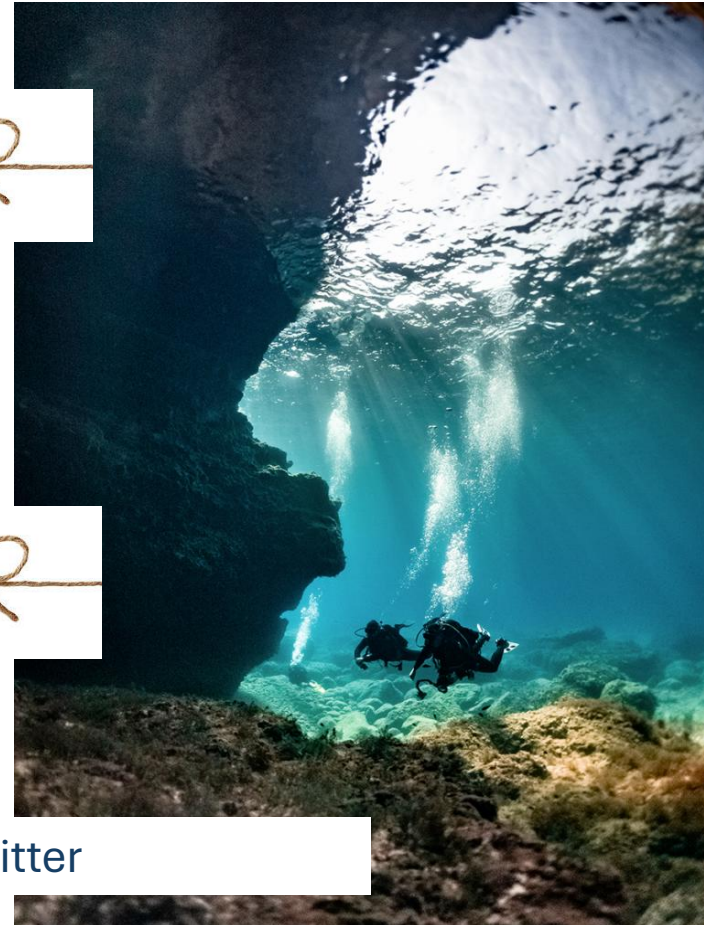
New opportunities for partnerships

- *in the Mediterranean and beyond*

UfM and the Barcelona Convention

Union for the Mediterranean

Barcelona Convention



Plastic Litter

New Context

- Political and Thematic (Plastic Treaty; EU Ocean and Med Pact; etc.)



The Pact for the Mediterranean

Co-creating a space of peace, prosperity and stability through a genuine partnership



- The Pact is the result of an extensive consultation process with the 10 southern Mediterranean partners, EU Member States, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, non-EU neighbouring countries, UN agencies and other international organisations. Given its unique composition as an inter-governmental organisation where all EU and southern Mediterranean partners are members, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has been closely involved. The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) has also played an important role in the consultations
- The Union for the Mediterranean has experience in building regional networks and leading flagship projects. With its convening power, the UfM will support the joint group meetings, and it will also be a partner in the roll-out of the Pact, including through its ministerial meetings.
- The UfM has developed expertise in specific areas such as Education, Employment and Economic Development, Water, Environment and Blue Economy; Crisis management and civil protection



It is built around six priorities:

- ✓ Protecting and restoring ocean health
- ✓ Boosting the competitiveness of the sustainable blue economy
- ✓ Supporting coastal, island communities and outermost regions
- ✓ Advancing ocean research, knowledge, skills and innovation
- ✓ Enhancing maritime security and defence as a prerequisite
- ✓ Strengthening EU ocean diplomacy and international rules-based governance

The European Ocean Pact

Sustaining the ocean that sustains us

“The new Pact for the Mediterranean, that will pave the way towards a common space of peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean region, building on the foundations of the 2021 Agenda for the Mediterranean. The Commission, in collaboration with the Union for the Mediterranean, will support the development of a blue economy sea-basin strategy on the Eastern Mediterranean, which currently lacks a dedicated structure for cooperation, based on the format of the WestMed Initiative and in cooperation with existing regional bodies”

A NEW POLITICAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

UfM SBE Roadmap based on the 2021 SBE Ministerial

- ✓ Governance & the future of sea basin strategies
- ✓ Marine research, innovation, skills, careers & employment
- ✓ Sustainable food from the sea: fisheries & aquaculture
- ✓ Sustainable, climate-neutral & zero-pollution maritime transport & ports
- ✓ Interactions between ML & the blue economy
- ✓ Coastal & maritime tourism
- ✓ MSP&ICZM
- ✓ Marine Renewable Energy
- ✓ Maritime Safety & Security
- ✓ Sustainable Investments

Ocean Pact

Built around **Six Strategic Objectives:**

- ✓ Protecting and restoring ocean health
- ✓ Boosting the competitiveness of the EU sustainable blue economy
- ✓ Supporting coastal and island communities, and outermost regions
- ✓ Enhancing ocean research, knowledge, skills and innovation
- ✓ Enhancing maritime security and defence
- ✓ Strengthening EU ocean diplomacy and international ocean governance

Marine Litter

Med Pact

- ✓ Connecting people
- ✓ Connecting countries
- ✓ Connecting economies

- *tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage.....*
- *Climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss heavily affect the Mediterranean region and its resilience. The clean transition also represents an opportunity to boost sustainable competitiveness in the region. The Pact will allow to harness the benefits arising from such transition, while addressing growing climate change impacts and environmental degradation, including in the framework of a possible Global Treaty against plastic pollution.....*




Support the transition towards a Green, Circular and Socially Inclusive Economy, based on sustainable consumption and production practices and nature-based solutions.
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(Axis 3)



ML – UfM Activities, Transfer and synergies



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Upcoming UfM ML relevant Regional Platforms/Working Groups

- UfM Working group on Environment, 15th April 2025
- UfM Regional Platform on SBE, 21-22 April 2026
- Med Green Week 2026 tbc including the UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Action
 - *Updates on multilateral agreements (Ex. Plastic Treaty, CBD, etc.)*
 - *Updates on GreenerMed Agenda and related actions*
 - *Updates on the SBE Roadmap and related actions*
 - *Regional initiatives, programs, projects and Partnerships*

An underwater photograph showing a large amount of plastic waste, including bags, bottles, and debris, floating in the water. The scene is set against a blue background, likely the ocean.

**Intergovernmental Negotiating
Committee on Plastic Pollution**

Plastic Busters and Toumali

Representation North-South

Equal footing;
multi-stakeholders; multi-level governance

Consensus among the 43 UfM member countries;
variable geometry

Labelled by the UfM



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Integration into the UfM/43 EuroMed countries agenda; Platform of dialogue with countries and stakeholders; convergence of efforts - policy, technical, possibly targeted financial support;etc.



Plastic Busters Initiative

North + South

- ✓ From monitoring & assessment to prevention & mitigation (micro + macro)
- ✓ Financing rounds supporting the overall process
- ✓ Links North South Med; Interreg - CBC
- ✓ Labelled by the UfM in 2016

SC results valid beyond MPAs

**PLASTIC BUSTERS
MPAs, Interreg
Med-financed**

*(Italy, France, Spain, Greece,
Albania, Croatia, Slovenia)*

**"COMMON"
(Coastal mgmt. &
monitoring
network to track
ML)
CBC-financed**

**CAPITALIZATION
PB CAP
CBC-financed
(2022)**

*(Egypt, Greece, Italy,
Jordan, Lebanon, Spain
and Tunisia)*

*Knowledge transfer to integrate
EbA into ICZM*



MARINE LITTER PLASTIC BUSTERS INITIATIVE



COMMON +
PLASTIC
BUSTERS CAP
2019 - 23

+2

SDSN-MED
Flagship project

2013

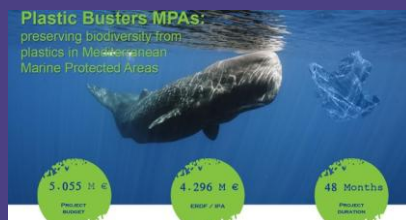


UfM Labelling
2016



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MED-Interreg
2018

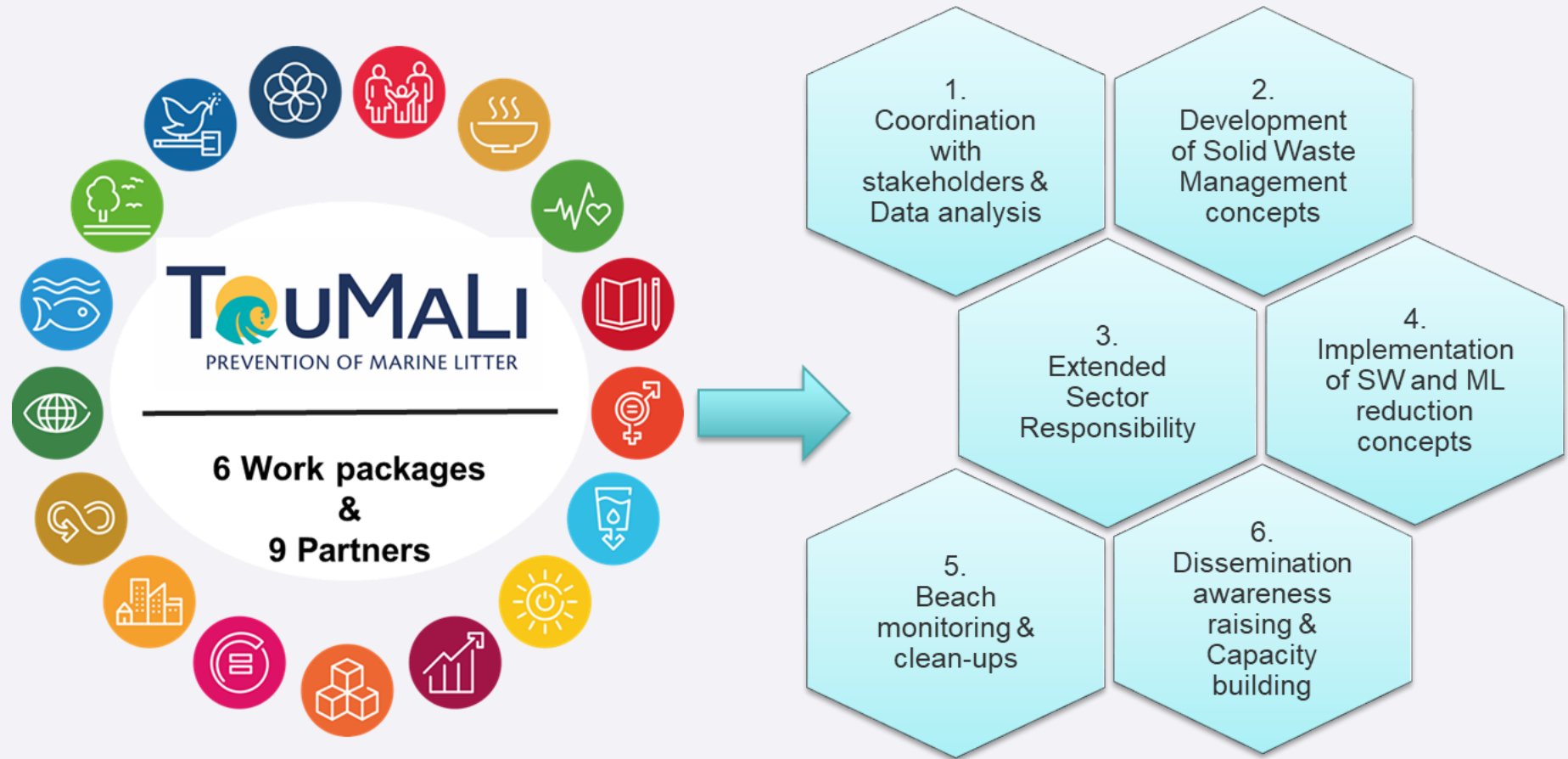




“CONTRIBUTION OF SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR FOR THE PROTECTION OF MARINE ECOSYSTEMS”



TOUMALI PROFILE OVERVIEW



- ✓ Giz supported UfM Webinar
- ✓ Interreg inter-programme coordination mechanism on sustainable tourism

NEW SYNERGIES AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Through a Multiprogramme Coordination Mechanism

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Euro-MED

Marittimo-IT FR-Maritime

NEXT MED

UfM Webinar

Scaling up synergies & partnerships for the sustainable maritime & coastal tourism transformation in the Mediterranean



10:00-12:30h CET



June 20, 2024



European Union



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The Hashemite
Kingdom of
Jordan



Implemented by
giz

Added value of the UfM label

- ✓ Since 2016
- ✓ Mobilization of Technical Assistance, enabling:
 - Scaling up from a project to a structured/coordinated process contributing to relevant regional frameworks & initiatives (*UNEP/MAP, Mission Restore Our Oceans, Pamex...*) + Complementing projects of other partner organizations (*WES, SwitchMed, TouMali...*)
 - Convergence around shared priorities & needs + progressive expansion to **Southern Med**
 - ‘**Springboard**’ to raise funds: Expert support resulting in 3 successful financing rounds (*Interreg EuroMed, ENI CBC Med*)
 - North-South/South-South opportunities for partnership and funding
 - Expansion of the PB team



Added value of the UfM label

- ✓ Science-policy nexus operationalization (policy papers backed by scientific data...)
- ✓ Enabling thematic links with: waste management, plastic production chain, SCP, ESD, biodiversity loss, economic losses, aquaculture, green and blue skills... + To the overall **green**, circular economy shift, linking land and sea



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= UfM support to ML related activities over time

- Evidence based decision making through the UFM Regional Platforms with countries and stakeholders
- Policy Paper/s
- Linking international, Med and national dimensions
- Thematic workshops and webinars
- Capacity building and technical assistance for project preparation (project preparation extended to more countries; preparation of thematic reports for dissemination; etc.)
- Support in upscaling, replication and capitalization of successful solutions and results at events (UNOC3; UfM Stakeholders' Conferences every two years; Med Green Week/s; CC COPs/Med Pavillion; Med talks; etc.)
- Integration of ML into Mediterranean multi-countries programs;
- Key regional partnerships, links between projects (Plastic Busters related projects and WES Trainings/Awards/scientific findings and related analysis, for ex.)



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= UfM support to ML over time

- News on the UfM Website in EN, FR, AR
- Regular info to FPs all around the Med
- Inclusion in digital hubs
- Dissemination of reports, expert publications, training resources, toolkits
- Amplification via social media



2018 Publication on Marine Litter Monitoring in the Mediterranean

Selection Criteria for Bioindicator Species



Monitoring Marine Litter in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Sea has been described as one of the areas most affected by marine litter. The marine environment and marine organisms have been investigated recently in the Mediterranean Sea. Despite the uncertainties and gaps in knowledge concerning marine litter, current evidence is more than sufficient to highlight the urgent need to implement mitigation actions (UNEP/MAP, 2015). Such a need has been widely recognized, for example in the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention (2013), covering the whole region, and in the European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) for European marine waters. The main objective of this document is to review the current knowledge on marine litter ingestion on Mediterranean biodiversity and to propose a methodological approach to assess marine organisms as bioindicator species and applying a new integrated monitoring tool to help mitigation actions at basin scale. Bioindicator species play an essential role in monitoring marine litter. The choice of selection criteria, developed by the Plastic Busters partners, is presented. This document (i) reviews the information currently available on the impact and effects of marine litter, and (ii) defines selection criteria for the choice of bioindicator species, (iii) proposes a multiphase impact of marine litter in bioindicator species, and (iv) identifies gaps and further development. The document combines assessment of the amount and type of litter ingested by a range of marine organisms, with the analysis of biological responses (biomarkers) present in the organism. The Annex 1, which sets out methodological details for assessing the presence and effects of marine litter, looks in more detail at the IMAP and the MSFD, including the descriptors and objectives for marine litter; and Annex 3, a table of Mediterranean species with documented marine litter ingestion.

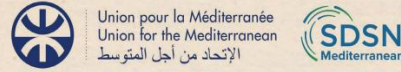
Authors: Matteo Baini SDSN Mediterranean Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, della Terra e dell'Ambiente Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA) Laboratorio di Scienze Fisiche, della Terra e dell'Ambiente Università di Siena, Siena, Italy; Silvia Baini Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, della Terra e dell'Ambiente Università di Siena, Siena, Italy; Claudia Leonzio Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, della Terra e dell'Ambiente Università di Siena, Siena, Italy; and Maria Cristina Fossi Plastic Busters Project leader at the Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA), Roma, Italy

January 2018

PDF

LITTER-FREE IS THE WAY TO BE

ACTIONS FOR A HEALTHY MEDITERRANEAN



THE ISSUE AT STAKE

Marine litter — and marine plastic pollution in particular — is a major threat due to its significant environmental, economic, social, political and cultural implications. Marine litter negatively impacts **coastal and marine ecosystems** and the **services** they provide, ultimately affecting **people's livelihoods** and **well-being**. Marine plastic pollution is not just an oceans' pollution issue. It is an air pollution and climate issue too as plastic — admittedly an indispensable material of today's

societies — contributes to greenhouse gas emissions at every stage of its lifecycle, from its production to its refining and up to the way it is managed as a waste product.

Plastic pollution in the Mediterranean Sea poses a threat to **countries' wellbeing, economic resilience** and **environmental sustainability**, with potential effects on human health yet to be fully understood.

as estimated in 2015, are at the level of over **260,000 tonnes** per year or **730 tonnes per day**, depending on the coastal population, which may vary depending on the country, representing more than 2% of the total inputs in the world's oceans (UNEP/MAP, 2015).

The root causes of marine litter in the Mediterranean are the same as anywhere else in the world: a complex combination of **production and consumption patterns, irresponsible behavior of individuals and economic sectors**, weak enforcement and/or **lack of policy and legislative frameworks**, poor solid waste management practices, **misconceptions** related to possible solutions, fragmented understanding of the problem due to the lack of fit-for-purpose data.

Overall, the Mediterranean economy is still marked by a linear system, which over-exploits natural resources, causes pollution and thus undermines

the resilience of the economic system. It also constitutes a lever to help achieve the UN 2030 Agenda and several of its SDGs.

Within this context, **PLASTIC BUSTERS** is continuously and concretely consolidating and advancing actions towards a litter-free Mediterranean.



The Mediterranean basin is particularly vulnerable to marine litter. Litter items found on Mediterranean



LITTER-FREE IS THE WAY TO BE

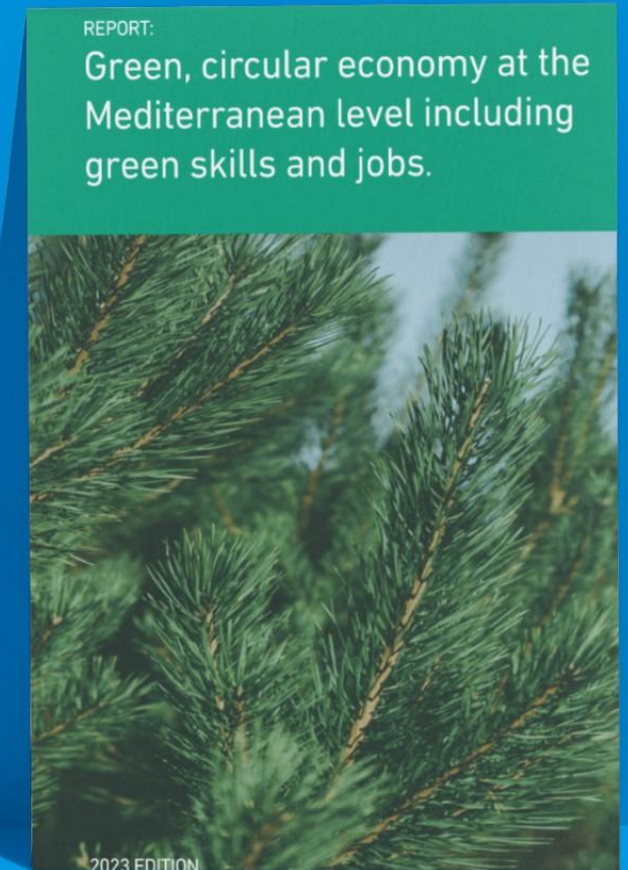
Actions for a healthy Mediterranean

2025 Edition Update

ML Policy Papers

STUDY ON GREEN, CIRCULAR AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY IN THE MED

- Report on green, circular economy at the Mediterranean level including green skills and jobs
- Overview on the status of GCE in the MED, including opportunities and pathways for transformation
- Implemented by UfM, supported by GIZ, with guidance by a group of experts and relevant organizations in the MED (e.g. MIO-ECSDE, Beta Centre, MedWaves, etc.)



UfM flagship publication on SBE: Advancing towards SBE in the MED (3rd Edition)

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Cross-Cutting Themes



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COLLABORATION WITH WES -BCA



20 case studies on
waste reduction

www.bestpractices-waste-med.net



50+ candidate
champions
of plastic pollution in
the Mediterranean



5 WES videos

including 3 on hot
Mediterranean challenges

- Circular Economy
- Plastic pollution & SUPs
- Construction & Demolition Waste



Activity bulletins



Modules, Reports,
Compendia,
Roadmaps,

MEDITERRANEAN GREEN WEEK



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With the financial support of:
 Sweden
Sverige

14-16 MAY 2024 / ISTANBUL, TÜRKİYE



THE UFM ENVIRONMENT/GREENERMED AGENDA

- 5th UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Change
- 8th UfM Working Group on Environment

MED GREEN WEEK FOUR THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

- + TWO CROSSCUTTING WORKSHOPS
 - ✓ Civil Society, with a focus on Women and Youth
 - ✓ Green Finance

Linked to other Output 2.4 related activities and achievements



Sustainable Food
Systems



Plastic Pollution



Maritime Spatial
Planning



Forestry and
Landscape Restoration

Linked to other Output 2.4 related activities and achievements

From monitoring & assessment ➡ prevention & mitigation (micro + macro) ➡ a multi-stressors approach

Miramar – Interreg EuroMed MedProAct – Interreg NextMed

North-South

Joint Launch in October 2026

30th October 2025

- ✓ **Date:** 30 October 2025
- ✓ **Time:** 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (CET)
- ✓ This event marked an important milestone for the **Plastic Busters initiative**, labelled by the UfM in 2016, and celebrated the launch of two new projects:
 - **MIRAMAR (Interreg Euro-MED)**
 - **MedProAct (Interreg NEXT MED)**
- ✓ Together, these initiatives reinforce a shared commitment to tackling marine pollution and promoting a more sustainable and resilient Mediterranean Sea



18th meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy
15-16 October, 2025

MULTI-STRESSOR APPROACH AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES: MIRAMAR AND MEDPROACT PROJECTS

Prof. Maria Cristina Fossi
SC of Plastic Busters Initiative
Biomarker Laboratory, University of Siena, Italy
fossi@unisi.it

18th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Blue Economy
15-16 October 2025

MAR_MEDPROACT 2025_UFM-V2_EDIT_1



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INTERREG EUROMED GOVERNANCE PROJECTS 2021-2027

Integration of South/East Med as associated partners; joint activities



Strengthening an
innovative
sustainable
economy



Protecting, restoring
and valorising the
natural environment
and heritage



Promoting
green living areas



Enhancing
sustainable tourism

THANK YOU!
MERCII !

شكر

Alessandra Sensi
Head of Sector Environment, Green and
Blue Economy

alessandra.sensi@ufmsecretariat.org



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**Play the video of Prof. Maria Cristina Fossi,
Plastic Busters,
University of Siena**